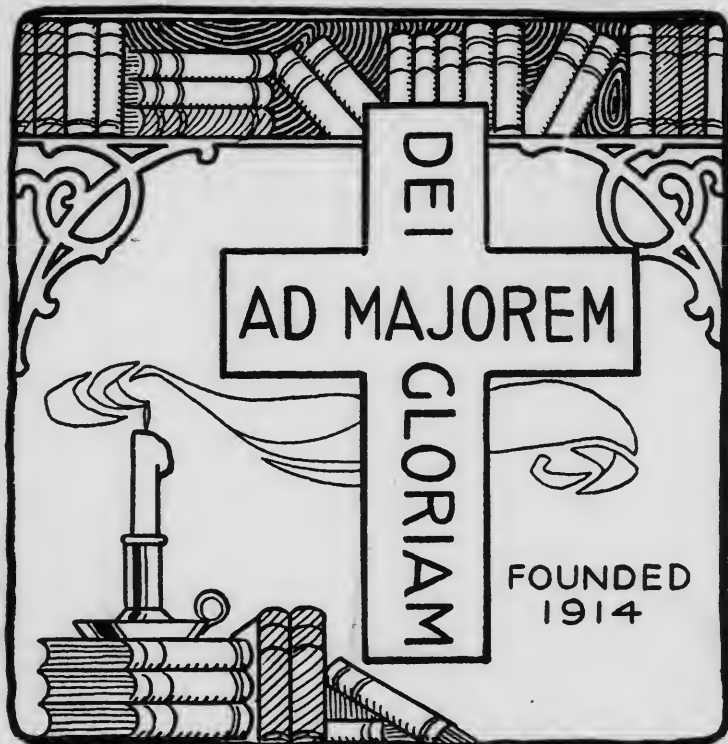


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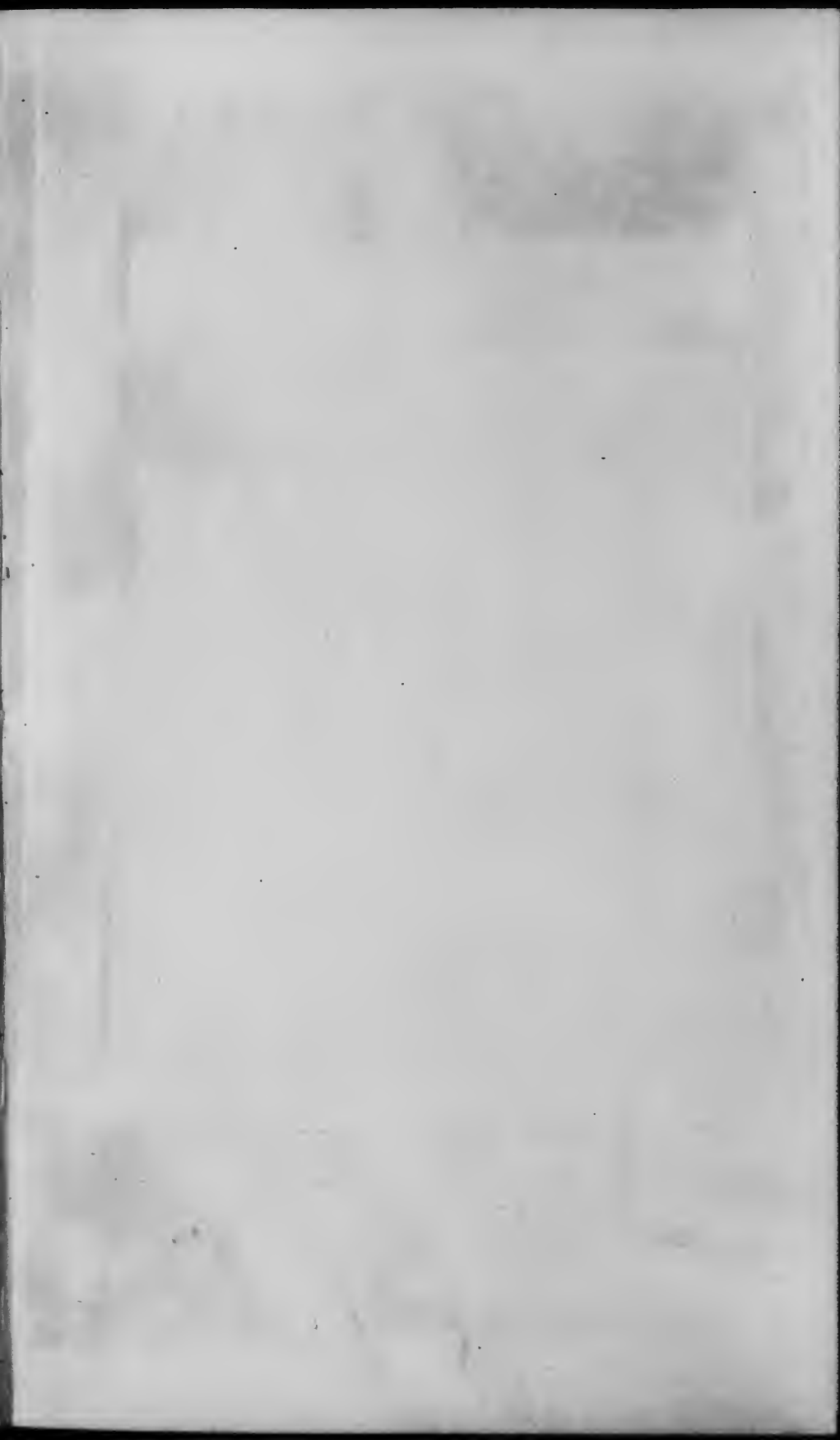
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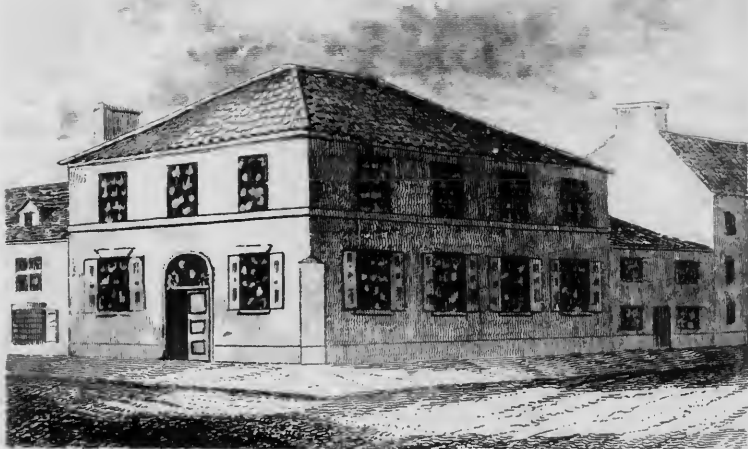
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WESLEYAN CHAPEL GRANTHAM,

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THE HISTORY  
OF  
WESLEYAN METHODISM,  
IN  
GRANTHAM  
AND ITS VICINITY:  
WITH  
PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND UTILITY, THE DISCIPLINE AND  
DOCTRINES OF THE CONNEXION;  
THE LIFE OF ITS FOUNDER, ETC.

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BY THOMAS COCKING.

---

Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.—*Daniel* xii. 4.

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LONDON :  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & Co., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.  
AND SOLD BY  
BUSHBY, GRANTHAM; NOBLE, BOSTON; & ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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1836.

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GRANTHAM:

PRINTED BY R. STORR, VINE-STREET.

TO  
THE MEMBERS OF THE WESLEYAN SOCIETIES

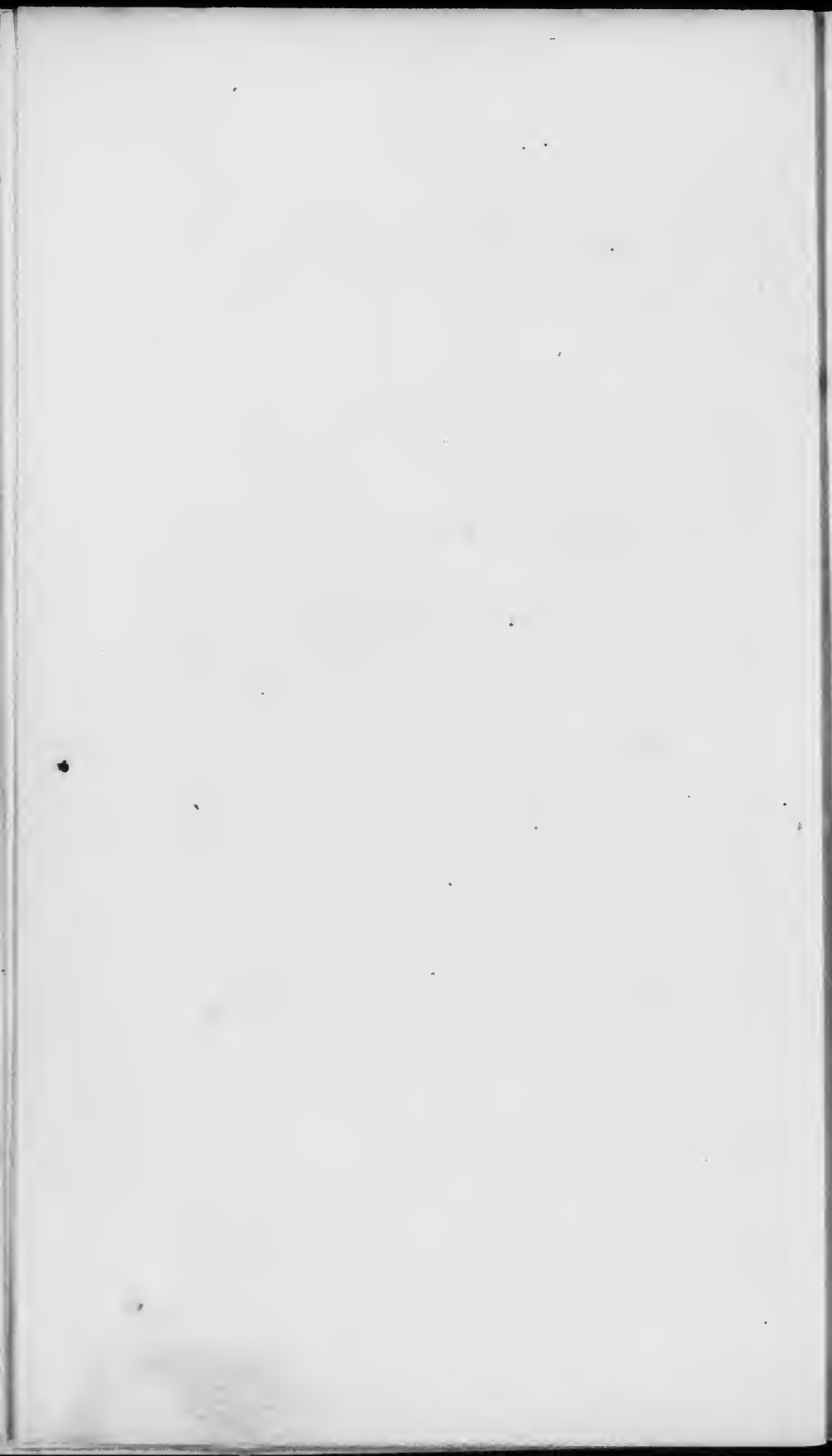
IN THE GRANTHAM CIRCUIT,

THIS  
MANUAL OF METHODISM

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED,

BY THE AUTHOR.



## INTRODUCTION.

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Whether Solomon wrote in reference to the mental activity of his own times, or whether prophetically, when he said, "of making many books there is no end," the declaration is certainly true in its application to the present age. The inundating influx of publications which the press continues to issue, to many persons, could a suppression of the tide be effected, no little gratification would be afforded. And in fact, unless a due regard to selection be had, the commendable taste for reading which now obtains, is in danger of being vitiated and cloyed, rather than nutritiously supplied and kept in a healthy tone, by the endless variety of works which the bookseller's catalogue caters for the public.

That the author of the present work should attempt to swell the terrent, by even casting in a single volume, may appear to some of his more distant friends, an act that is either presumptuous or unnecessary; and probably they will be ready to suspect that some sagacious reviewer will chastise his temerity with a justly merited rebuke; unless it should be found that his book is not of that tangible kind as to yield to the acumen of a reviewer, or that its value should not be thought equivalent to the expense of his caustic.

It might be considered proper that some apology should be made for the step which he has taken in bringing forward his work to the public eye, as it probably would tend to soften down the asperity of criticism. To such apologies he is no friend, sensible even as he is of his own deficiencies, and of the candour which this production of his pen will need from readers whose ability to judge of its merits is only of an ordinary extent. If the reasons be asked why he undertook to send forth such a work, he will frankly acknowledge them.

1. The primary object he had in view, was to memorialise the pious dea, to whose zeal and liberality and constancy in the cause of God, the present generation of Methodists in the Grantham circuit, is indebted for the means of grace established amongst them, and which are likely to be perpetuated to their children's children, in peaceful and profitable security.

2. The Wesleyan Conference has expressed a wish, at different times, that something of the kind should be done in every circuit throughout the Connexion, in order that a succinct account of the work of God might be retained. In accordance with this expression the writer has done the best he could in collecting the scattered fragments of original materials, with which he has attempted to raise a monumental pile to departed worth, and on which to inscribe a few of the victories of the Cross which have been achieved over the usurped territories of sin and Satan, in this circuit. And although the materials may be rudely put together, and the sculpture but meanly executed, yet what is done may serve to be improved upon and extended by a workman of better taste and brighter genius, at a future period.

3. The grateful recollection of former and present associations has been an incentive to engage in this publication. The writer does not forget his former connexion with this part of methodistical soil, and how that for a number of years he has had many dear and valued Christian friends living upon it, several of whom were his counsellors and guides during the early part of his spiritual warfare, and in whose most fervent prayers he has always considered himself as having had an interest ever since he commenced the conflicts and the toils connected with the itinerant work of a Wesleyan preacher. For previously to his going out into that field of labour and extended usefulness, he had acted in the capacity of a local preacher for the space of seven years, in the Grantham circuit. The advantage of a previous residence upon the spot, and of general intercourse with the society at large, and having since laboured for the space of three years as the superintendent of the circuit, a greater opportunity has been afforded him, than perhaps any other person, of presenting a more correct and circumstantial narrative.

4. If a manual of methodism in this circuit is demanded, as being conducive to the interests of religion, no time would be more favorable than the present to produce it, if accuracy, in such a work, is deemed a desideratum. All the first members of society in the oldest places have gone to their reward; whilst the second race is rapidly dropping off the stage of life, to join, in a better world, their fathers and first companions in tribulation, and in "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." In the record of events, the testimony of persons who were themselves eye and ear witnesses and parties immediately concerned therein, is the most substantial of oral kind, the character of the individuals being such as to give credibility to their word. But when past events have to be written from traditionary statements, which embrace a succession of generations, or that of only one or two, it becomes very difficult to find the proper links of the connecting chain. Of this difficulty the writer was never more apprised than of late, whilst making enquiries after a few particulars for drawing up an obituary for the Magazine, of a member of society who had recently died. She was the oldest member in the circuit at the time of her death, and as she had left no written memoranda of her religious experience, recourse was obliged to be had to other means of information: and whilst she had frequently spoken of certain circumstances which led to her conversion, and to the introduction of the gospel into the village and neighbourhood where she resided, to different branches of her family and to her religious friends; yet their memories were not sufficiently tenacious to retain the particulars in any kind of order, or with that distinctiveness which might have been expected. Probably she had never spoken of these things with any design that they should be kept in particular remembrance; nor was the testimony which she bore to the providence and grace of God in her behalf, listened to by her survivors under the expectation of ever been called upon to reiterate what had fallen from her lips. Consequently the distinct recollection of the particulars was lost. This disappointment led to farther enquiries, in the prosecution of which, many incidents, both characteristic and historical of Methodism in these parts, were met with; and which was deemed, if gleaned up and placed in order, might not be altogether void of interest and im-

portance. Hence the origin of the publication, which has been prosecuted amidst various difficulties.

5. An encouragement to perseverance in the plan which was thus incited, has been taken from the Bible. For whilst some may be disposed to charge upon it the innovation of novelty,—as either unprecedented or uncalled for,—it would not be difficult to defend it on the ground of scripture precedent and Divine injunction. A great part of the sacred volume is comprised of religious narrative, descriptive of the moral character and piety of individuals and their families; tracing at the same time the general outlines of God's providential and gracious dealings with his church and people. And the particulars of these events were commanded to be handed down from father to son, and from one generation to another. At different periods of longer or shorter interval, many of the more generally useful incidents were carefully written down, that the recollection of them might be retained. But as writing was not very common in those ages, a special providence must have been exerted to retain so distinctly such a variety of events for so long a time, and which passed through so many generations, as frequently was the case. And no doubt considerable efforts were used to impress the subjects upon the memory. Hence, that the people might recur to them as they were treasured up in their memories, or recorded elsewhere, the particulars themselves and references to them, were turned into verse, and sang in praises to God, when congregated in his sanctuary. "We have heard," says the Psalmist, "with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in times of old." And again, "Which we have heard and known and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done."

It must be allowed, the nearer it is to our own days,—and if amongst a people where greater affinity to us exists,—that the power of God is made manifest, the more interesting and impressive the announcement becomes; and the closer the resemblance of circumstances that exist, the greater is the encourage-

ment derived, than when we look through ages long gone by,—at a people of another nation, and of other tongues, and whose manners and customs were so different to our own. But notwithstanding these incidental distinctions, there is an identical resemblance in the change of moral character which the gospel effects in all ages and nations, and in what language soever they may speak, or whatever may be the outward condition in which the truth of God finds them ; thus evincing the immutability of Jehovah and his incarnate Son,—the same yesterday to day and for ever.

Since the art of writing has become so generally known, and that of printing so prevalent, great facility is afforded for securing, as well as propagating, the profitable and striking occurrences in the modern history of the church of God. It is to this mode of retention that the memory transfers with facility, what is suspected might soon become too burdensome for it to retain. And since this is the case, the tenacity of memory looses its grasp, so as to render traditionary communications more dubious and imperfect, than what they were when this faculty of the mind was disciplined to depend more extensively on its own capabilities. This repository change having been made, and the imbecility of the memory not likely to be obviated, recourse should be had to what is substituted in its place ; and so commit to paper those occurrences of a man's life, or of the year, or the day, that may be worthy of handing down to posterity. If Providence interposed in the preservation of certain parts of the oral history of the church, and which was recognised as correct in after periods by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost ; is there not a Providence to be discerned in giving to men the facility of perpetuating, for the benefit of their species, the events of their own lives, or of the lives of others, through the medium of writing and the invention of printing ? Compliance, therefore, with providential changes ought to be regarded with cheerfulness and promptitude. To neglect doing this, is like in effect doing nothing at all ; it is to allow one generation after another, full of incident, to pass into oblivion without affording the benefit of it to successors.

6. As the work may possibly fall into the hands of individu-



als who have never read any generally correct account of the origin of methodism, the doctrinal views maintained by the body, the life and character of its Founder, and other subjects connected with the economy of the Wesleyan Methodists, the first part is introduced for their information in these particulars, and which may probably induce them to investigate the standard works of the Connexion. It is also designed as a help to the members of the society, whose knowledge of the subjects contained therein is but scanty, and whose opportunities for reading and means of obtaining books are very limited, that they may attain a better acquaintance with the history, principles, and privileges of the people with whom they are united, and be led to a more careful study of the Holy Scriptures, which are alone able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

In conclusion, the writer commends the whole to the Divine blessing; praying that the rising generation may imitate the piety and zeal of those who have gone down with honor into the grave; that they may tell their history with hallowing effect to the generation following: and if this record contributes in the least to such a desirable result, he is satisfied;—then will his labour not have been in vain in the Lord, to whom be all the glory for ever.

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PART I.

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CHAPTER I.

ON THE RISE AND UTILITY OF METHODISM—THE ITINERANT MINISTRY—AND CLASS MEETINGS.

THE remark of Luther, that “a revival of religion never lasts more than a generation,”—a period of thirty years;—or, as others have affirmed who have been disposed to prophesy evil of the prosperity of the cause of God, that all “will be at an end when the first instruments are removed;” will not hold good in the face of Wesleyan Methodism. It has now existed for more than three generations, and with unabated success in its operations, in the awakening and conversion of sinners, both in Great Britain and Ireland and America, as well as in other parts of the world whither its Missionaries have been sent. The increase of members to its community, from year to year, has gradually and with considerable rapidity proceeded; so that from its organization in 1739, when eight or ten persons in London first met together, “deeply

convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption," were formed into a class, until the year 1834, the number has swollen to the amazing extent of one million four thousand three hundred and twenty-eight; which has been at the average rate of more than ten thousand a year. The friends of Zion may justly exclaim, "What hath God wrought?" In some places the societies have suffered occasional declensions, but at the same period those in many other parts have so increased as not only to supply the loss sustained elsewhere, but to present an aggregate surplus of members upon the preceding year.

But it is not to numerical bulk that any part of the professing Church is to look, and thence calculate its best prosperity. It is to the spiritual union of its members with the Great Head of the Church universal, and to a correspondency of conduct with the precepts of the Gospel, that the *principle* of prosperity is to be deduced. And where these distinguishing marks of true Christianity in a religious body are apparent, an accession of members, from the wicked and ungodly, is cause of rejoicing. And when a Christian society is "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," it is scarcely possible to be otherwise than that its members should be "multiplied."

This leads to an important enquiry. Is there this cause of rejoicing at the increase of Methodism? Were this enquiry to be submitted to the judgment of the religious world in general, a diversity of opinion upon it no doubt would be entertained. The qualities of good, bad, and indifferent would respectively be ascribed to it. But allowing it to be a subject of dispute, who are most proper to be chosen as judges to determine the case? Not those persons

certainly who are unrenewed themselves, and are set in formidable array against the religion of the heart. Their ignorance of the vital principles of the Christian system would at once invalidate their testimony; notwithstanding the high titles, the learning, or the influence in society to which they might lay claim: because "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." As an illustration of this Scripture, a noble lord, some fifty years ago, calling at a Theological Institution near London, on some business, was led to make certain enquiries respecting the principles of the Academy; upon which the rules and regulations of the establishment were put into his hands. On reading a clause which referred to the moral discipline of the students, and which required that attention should particularly be directed to their improvement in experimental religion; he remarked to one of the students, a gentleman now living;—"experimental religion! why what's that? I have heard of experimental *philosophy*;—but I never heard of experimental *religion* before;—what does it mean?" The student attempted to explain the subject by a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in effecting the renewal of the heart. But he seemed as much bewildered as the Jewish Rabbi, to whom Jesus Christ explained the nature of the new birth, and enforced the gracious change implied in being "born again," as necessary for a man to undergo before he can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. "How," exclaimed the Rabbi in perplexity, "can these things be?" Persons of such remarkable deficiency are not competent to determine the religious tone and character of Methodism. Neither

are those who form their opinions of this community from the writings of avowed enemies to what is called sectarianism; nor from the publications of authors who belong to other denominations, some of whom, either ignorantly or designedly, have caricatured in the most distorted manner the chief features of this body. The motives of its founder, the nature of its doctrines, and the manner of its discipline, have been falsely represented, and uncourteously treated\*. Nor are those proper persons to be brought into court of evidence to decide the question at issue, who have been cut off from the society by the excision knife of discipline; nor are such as have left the community from private pique, personal animosity, or worldly disappointment; which has been a principal cause of the disaffection, divisions, and schisms that have taken place in religious bodies since the commencement of Christianity. Such motives will often be found to originate a departure from Church fellowship, more than a deliberate persuasion that the Holy Ghost had left the community to which such persons belonged, and that therefore it was high time for them also to depart; or that to unite with another people would tend more to their spiritual interests; and being a people also whose views of discipline, doctrines, or experience, are more in unison with their own than with those of the Church from which they separate. These reasons might justify a removal from one community to another, and which should be regarded as primary motives to induce such a step, and not the former ones as is too frequently the case.

Who then, after all, are the properly qualified per-

\*Southey's *Life of Wesley*. Nightingale's *Ditto*. Dr. Bennet's *History of the Dissenters* :—See review in *Methodist Mag.* 1834.

sons to decide the question, whether Methodism is of God or not; and whether the piety of the people keeps pace with the augmentation of their number? The reply is, that every person, who from proper motives makes the enquiry, must determine for himself. In doing which let him judge righteous judgment. The standard works of the connexion should first be carefully perused;—then let the doctrines preached—the experience professed—the means of grace which are used—the precepts inculcated—and the discipline exercised,—be candidly investigated and compared with the infallible standard of the Holy Scriptures, a favorable verdict it is scarcely doubted will be obtained, and a candid acknowledgment educed that Wesleyan Methodism is a living branch of the Church of Christ on earth, and that God is in the midst of it in very deed and truth. But whilst this cause of rejoicing is admitted, it cannot but be conceded that there is room for amendment. The branch might be more fruitful than it is. Personal conformity to the image of God, zeal for good works, and general usefulness in the world, might be far more extensively promoted. And after all, however abundantly successful in the attainment of Christian holiness, and fruitful in every good word and work, the community might be, there would not be found cause for self-complacency, or reason to congratulate the attainment of well-directed effort, as though it were meritorious; for “when ye shall have done all those things,” enjoins the Redeemer, “which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.” And, “By grace are ye saved.”

It has been occasionally more than suggested, even by some amongst the Methodists themselves, that



there is a tendency in the body to degenerate; and that Methodism, and the Preachers especially, are not now what they formerly were. It would ill become the writer of this sketch to attempt to refute this supposition, which in some instances amounts to a positive charge, by arguments drawn from his own resources; and particularly when such a charge is advanced by senior members of the society, who claim superior evidence from personal acquaintance with the state of religion as it may now exist to some extent around them, and compared with its appearance in days gone by,—antecedently to the writer's knowledge of the Methodists. And certainly, "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." But it must be admitted that there is occasional danger of being misguided by the opinions of the apparently sagacious, and when asserted under the advantage of a sway of years; for "Great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand wisdom." Probably then he may be allowed to shew his opinion,—an opinion which will certainly be in favor of an improvement in the connection as a whole, whatever may be the declension of piety in certain persons and separate societies. It is with the question in its general application the writer has to do, and not with individuals and insulated societies; as the state of such does not afford a criterion by which to judge of the healthy condition of the whole body. The charge alleged by these persons he thinks is more than neutralized, by other evidence which denies the validity of their testimony. First, it appears their temper of mind is such as to disqualify them from giving evidence in such a case. And, secondly, the testimony of others is to be adduced whose Christian character was most sterling, and

whose circumstances in life, and connection with the great body of Methodists, were such as to afford them every advantage to form a proper estimate of the subject to which their testimony is borne. The persons who possess this predilection to undervalue the present state of religious influence among the Methodists, by comparing it with former times, are generally such as have sustained loss in their own souls; and "taking a *prospect* of what is *without*, from a *retrospect* of what is *within*, they imagine that all are in the same apostate condition with themselves." Mr. Wesley used to give the significant appellation of *Crokers* to those who were always uttering, "ye are fallen! ye are fallen!" And as like produces like, there is great danger of listening to the sound of this croaking note. But rather let every believer be animated by the promises of the Gospel, and emulous to excel in love to God and man. "Be ye therefore steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the works of the Lord."

This attempt to contrast *former* times with the *present*, in order to depreciate the position in which Methodism now stands, has been masterly handled by Dr. A. Clarke; than whom, to decide in such a case, no man's judgment would be preferred by the connexion at large. No apology it is deemed will be necessary for quoting the whole passage as it stands in his "Letter to a Preacher on his entrance into the Work of the Ministry," published in 1812; and having given what the Doctor states, it will be deemed quite sufficient without introducing more evidence on the subject.—"Although I have been of considerable standing in the Connexion," proceeds the Doctor, "yet I do not think on that account, my opinion can be entitled to much attention: but as I

have taken some pains to form it, and you wish to know it, it cannot be unacceptable to *you*. The abilities of a workman are best known by his work: judging in this way, I conceive the Preachers in general to be a most extraordinary body of men. The work that is performed by their ministry, is, (I speak, I trust, with a pure conscience) the most extensive, and the most glorious of which I have ever heard or read. Now I judge, if these men were not very high in God's favour, he could not bless their work in so eminent a manner: and if they did not, in general, so walk as to please him, they could not stand so high in his favour. Therefore, I conclude, that the great body of Preachers, is a body of eminently useful and holy men, whose great actuating soul, is the Spirit of the Most High. I think I know the Preachers as well as any man in the connexion: for I have made it a sacred point to hear all their preaching, both evening and morning, at every Conference I have attended for many years. And after having seriously considered the *matter* and *manner* of their preaching, I scruple not to assert that they are (for pure doctrine, good sound sense, various knowledge, and impressive natural eloquence) at least equal to any body of ministers I know in the nation. And I am satisfied, that nothing but the glorious *strictness* of their doctrine and discipline, prevents them from being the most popular Preachers in the land. 'But is there not a *declension* of the work? And on your own ground, does not this prove that there is a *defect* in the workmen?' If I could credit the premises, I must certainly admit the conclusion. But I cannot. I have been thirty years a travelling Preacher: I have had every part of the work under my eye in many of the little places, and

in some of the greatest. I have diligently consulted all the records of our revival; I have compared the former with the present times: and rigid impartial justice obliges me to draw the following conclusion:—The work of God among the Methodists is at present, abundantly more extensive, more scriptural, more rational, and at least as *deep* as it has been from the beginning. I judge thus from what I have seen, from what I know, and from what I have read. Whatever has been suggested *against* the holiness and usefulness of the Preachers, and the extent and purity of the work, by individuals among ourselves, or by any others, (comparing the former with the present times;) I religiously believe to be utterly unfounded. And while I magnify the grace of the Lord Jesus towards us, I heartily pray that we may exceed our former selves, and walk more and more worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called!"

The polity of Methodism is sometimes charged with partaking too much of peculiarity. Whatever peculiarities may distinguish it from other religious denominations, there appears nothing in its economy but what fairly may be deduced from the word of God. And it is to a tenacious adherence to what may be deemed some of its peculiarities, that the former and present prosperity which has attended its enterprises may be mainly attributed. A few of the features somewhat peculiar to the body, may be briefly noticed; and in the adoption of which the Founder of the Sect was led from providential circumstances more than from design. And, indeed, every thing connected with the Constitution of the Society originated in the leadings of Providence, more than in any premeditated scheme. Hence the adaptation of one thing to another, and the harmony

which may be perceived in the working of the whole system. That, therefore, which an inscrutable and gracious Providence directs, ought not to be slightly dispensed with, nor hastily removed, for the substitution of any thing else at the suggestion of human devise,—as it is more likely to wear *long*, and to wear *well*.

One of the peculiarities to which reference is made is the *Itinerant Plan* of the Wesleyan Ministry. This regular change of Preachers is commended by the usages of the Church in apostolic and primitive ages. Certain prejudices may be entertained against the plan on account of the Preachers and their families having so frequently to remove from place to place, as it must tend to affect various social attachments and domestic arrangements, as well as to interrupt essential pastoral duties. But the interruption to the discharge of these duties is extensively met by the assistance of the leaders, whose knowledge of the members of their classes, enables the new Preachers to obtain an early acquaintance with the state of the Society in general. The quarterly visitations also, when the tickets of membership are renewed, afford them great facility in ascertaining the experience of the flock over which they are set to watch. The privations and inconveniences alluded to, painful, however, as they are occasionally felt, are of minor importance to the general advantages which result to the connexion from the method originally adopted for the exchange of Preachers every first, second, or third year of their appointment to a circuit, and to which regulation the Conference and Societies up to the present time have attended with so much regularity. What is there after all so calculated to give efficiency to the Gospel ministry, as to maintain

a consistency of character in those who preach the word of life, and the cultivation of a unison of sentiment among the ministers themselves in a regard for purity of Christian doctrines? This has been a primary consideration in the continuance, if not in the adoption, of the Itinerant system. And long experience shews that the end has been secured; whilst the well-working of the machinery sanctions its establishment. As the influx and reflux of the tides, and the constant commotion of the waves, keep the waters of the great deep from becoming stagnant and in a state of purity; so, in like manner, this change of Preachers in regular succession, from one circuit to another, throughout the connexion, tends very materially to perpetuate the purity of the doctrines and discipline of Methodism. The frequent intermixture also of the Preachers at the Conferences, the District Meetings, and as colleagues, and their having to direct and associate with the different societies and society officers, are all so many means to protect both preachers and people against dead formality and heterodoxy, and from priestly domination on the one hand, and from oligarchical usurpation on the other; which are frequently attendant on a settled ministry and independent churches.

Nothing is so important as the promotion of piety, and the practice of Christian morals in the world; and nothing certainly is calculated to secure these objects so much as a faithful ministry and the exercise of wholesome discipline. The Itinerant Plan, from practical results, is therefore defended, as being adapted in its nature beyond any other plan, to keep up the general faithfulness of ministers and to enable them to enforce the moral discipline of the church. If this be correct, let the Methodists then maintain

their Itinerancy. The magnitude of its utility should outweigh the minor inconveniences which may be attached to it.

The admission of persons into society, and their continuance in church-fellowship, form another feature of peculiarity in Methodism. A person is first received on trial for at least two or three months, and afterwards admitted a member of society. "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, and that is, '*a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.*' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,—

"*First*, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind : especially that which is most generally practised. Such as

"The taking the name of God in vain :

"The profaning the Day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling:

"Drunkenness : *buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them*, unless in cases of extreme necessity :

"*Fighting, quarrelling, brawling ; brother going to law with brother ; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing ; the using many words in buying or selling :*

"The *buying or selling unaccustomed goods :*

"The *giving or taking things on usury ; i. e. unlawful interest :*

"*Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation ; particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or Ministers :*

"Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us :

“Doing what we know is not for the glory of God ;  
as,

“The *putting on of gold or costly apparel* ;

“The *taking such diversions* as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus ;

“The *singing* those *songs*, or *reading* those *books*, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God :

“Softness, and needless self-indulgence :

“Laying up treasure upon earth :

“Borrowing without a probability of paying ; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

“5. It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

“*Secondly*, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity ; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men :

“To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by helping or visiting them that are sick, or in prison :

“To their souls ; by instructing, *reproving*, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with ; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that ‘ We are not to do good, unless *our hearts be free to it.*’

“By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be ; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business ; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them *only.*



“By all possible *diligence* and *frugality*, that the Gospel be not blamed.

“By ruuning with patience the race that is set before them, *denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily*; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world: and looking that men should *say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake*.

“6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

“*Thirdly*, By attending upon all the ordinances of God: such are,

“The public worship of God;

“The ministry of the word, either read or expounded;

“The supper of the Lord;

“Family and private prayer;

“Searching the Scriptures; and

“Fasting or abstinence.

“7. These are the General Rules of our Societies: all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

“JOHN WESLEY.

“*May 1, 1743.*”

“CHARLES WESLEY.”

This ample quotation from the "Rules of the Society," is designed for the information of those persons into whose hands this work may fall, who are ignorant of the discipline of the connexion, and of the moral conduct required of its members. Every person must perceive that no sentiment is expressed in these rules, to raise a suspicion in the mind that the preceptive injunctions of Methodism are calculated to operate unfavourably on the well-being of society at large. A candid investigation of them cannot but obtain the acknowledgment that they are scripturally legitimate. That the sceptic and libertine will raise objections there can be no doubt; but it is not to the vitiated taste or perverted reason of such characters, that either the doctrines of Christianity or the discipline and church order of a religious society are to be tested; but rather to men of sound judgment and common sense, who possess veneration sufficient for the Bible to make it the standard of faith and practice.

The *Class Meetings* of the Methodists are the gate of admission into the Society. The meeting in class is made a condition of membership. No person can be a member of the Methodist Society unless he regularly meet in class. If he neglect to do so for three weeks in succession, if not prevented by sickness, distance, or unavoidable business, he is considered, by such neglect, to exclude himself. Not that meeting in class is a guarantee for continuance in society against any delinquency of which a member may be accused and the charge substantiated; but whatever excellences of character may be apparent in an individual, these are not sufficient to constitute membership whilst meeting in class is neglected. A great outcry, however, has been raised

against Methodist Class Meetings, and also the Love-feasts, which are a kindred means of grace. Both professed friends and avowed enemies have attacked these means of religious fellowship with sarcasm, buffoonery, and vituperation, to bring them into derision and contempt. That persons of other denominations, professing serious godliness, should join in this attack with those of unrenewed minds, which is not unfrequently the case, is rather a matter of surprise, and displays a conduct which renders it difficult to determine the *motive* whence it originates. The prejudices of education, in some instances, may influence them in this opposition. They have been taught to look upon Methodism as something very *bad*; and, therefore, the conclusion is quite natural, that nothing can possibly generate from it that is *good*. Because Class Meetings are peculiar to such an heretical body, to join in a hue-and-cry against them may be looked upon, they may think, not only as justifiable but praiseworthy. To declaim against these means which were instituted for spiritual profit, merely because they are methodistical, betrays a judgment less discriminating than was manifested by many of the Reformed Churches, when in their zeal against the abuse of forms and ceremonies in the Popish Church, they ran into the opposite extreme, and would submit to have no form at all. Such is the antipathy of some to what might be considered to savour of Methodism, that if spiritual life in their community depended upon the adoption of Class Meetings, they would deem it more tolerable to sacrifice the good, than incur the supposition that they had been beholden to the example of the Methodists for the means of attaining it. But it is not the intention of the writer to attempt to meet every pre-

judice that may be indulged against the Wesleyans, nor to rebut all the attacks which may be made upon its economy. All that he intends is the advancement of a few desultory remarks, as he passes along to the primary object of the work he has undertaken. But as to Class Meetings, notwithstanding the ribaldry in which certain characters are prone to indulge against them, the writer would not be intimidated from standing forth in their defence; and is bold enough to affirm, either in the face of religious raillery or more sober argument, in opposition to their utility, that they are a principal bulwark of piety in the Connexion. Give up Class Meetings, and the Methodists would give up the glory and stability of their system. It was the organization of these means which originated Methodism, and they will stand or fall together.

The great design of these Meetings is to keep up the life of God in the soul of man; and if this be not maintained in a Christian society, what avails the form of sound words, the display of zeal, or any other external excellence? If the *power* of godliness be wanting, where is the intrinsic worth of the *form*? "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." And what a sweeping charge was that which Jesus Christ brought against the church at Ephesus, for having departed from the love of God, which had been so happily possessed by its members on their first reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. Many excellent traits of character were retained by them, but none of which, nor the whole

conjointly, were found sufficient to compensate for the loss of *love*,—"the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Nor were these properties sufficiently adequate to protect them from the visitation of the blighting mildew of God's displeasure, which was threatened them in the removal of a faithful ministry from amongst them, and the withdrawal of spiritual visitations. Nothing could possibly save the church from complete extinction, or from a state of entire barrenness and unprofitableness, but the restoration of its members to the life and power of vital godliness. "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. NEVERTHELESS I have somewhat against thee, *because thou hast left thy first love*. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

Seeing, then, that in the estimation of God, there is nothing which can stand in the place of heart-purifying religion, a Christian society does well to adopt such measures in its internal government as are best calculated to secure that end. This vital spiritual intercourse,—this fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, is a privilege very prominently set forth in the Gospel, and to be

enjoyed by all who truly believe. Hence it is that the Methodists manifest so much solicitude to induce all who sit under their ministry, to pass into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And they feel satisfied that Class Meetings are admirably conducive to the attainment of this inestimable privilege, and to the maintenance of the soul-transforming power of saving grace; connected also as these means are with mutual prayer offered up to Almighty God on the part of the members of the respective classes, that his special blessing may be vouchsafed, as the diversified experience of the class may appear to demand.

But we hear it objected, Who hath required this at your hands? Whence do you deduce your scriptural precepts and examples in favour of Class Meetings? And that which is not supported by divine sanction, is ill adapted to secure the divine blessing; and that therefore the good which some are so forward to state they have derived at these meetings, may with all fairness be suspected to be merely suppositious. To such persons as may congratulate themselves with this objection, as being conclusive that Class Meetings are of human invention, and thence to discountenance and decry them; it may be remarked, by way of refutation, that if every mode of divine worship and means of spiritual improvement adopted by any Protestant community, were to be submitted to the test of the letter of Scripture, little would be found to bear the scrutiny. For instance, where is the plain scripture direction or precedent for either sprinkling in the baptism of infants, or immersion in that of adults; for kneeling at the altar whilst in the act of receiving the elements of the Lord's Supper, or sitting in a promis-

cuous manner in the pews, whilst the elders of the church carry round the bread and wine; or for administering the sacrament in the morning of the Lord's day? Whence is the order deduced as regarded in public worship, by singing, reading the Scriptures, then praying, singing again, announcing a particular text and preaching from it, singing a third time, and then concluding by prayer; and all this in regular succession? Where is the form of marriage service to be found in the Bible? And what authority is there for Sabbath schools, and the order of conducting them? Where are the exact rules laid down for admission into church fellowship, and the expulsion of unworthy members? The fact is, whilst the Scriptures enjoin a regard to decency and order in these things, they lay down no specific plan; they present the general outline, which may easily be distinguished, whilst they leave the filling of it up to what prudence and circumstances may dictate, allowing ample scope for the enterprise of laudible zeal and activity.

The Methodists, however, have nothing to fear from divine revelation for their Class Meetings. They fall as much within the line of scriptural recognition as any other means of grace which may be instituted for the edification of the church. In the degenerate state of the Jewish church, when Malachi uttered his predictions, the conduct of the faithful, in preserving themselves from the contamination of the wicked, is thus stated by the prophet: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name," &c. This passage, whilst it delineates the internal

procedure of the ancient church of God, presents the characteristic feature of the Methodist Class Meetings. There is,—

1st, The character of those who met together; such as “feared the Lord,” without respect of persons;—not the ungodly, nor such as felt no concern for the glory of God and the salvation of their souls.

2ndly, The business of their meeting. They “spake often one to another.” The subject of their conversation may be inferred from the character they sustained, and what is said of their thoughts; for they “feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.” Their conversation no doubt would be upon their general and particular obligations to God,—the lamentable moral depravity of their nation,—their hopes and fears relative to the divine mercy and justice,—the best means of a reformation to avert the divine displeasure, and procure a return of his blessings,—and their individual as well as collective duty. Now, the same are *substantially* the subjects of conversation in Methodist Class Meetings, diversified only by circumstances and Gospel phraseology, and partaking somewhat more of individuality. The personal experience of those primitive saints would be cause of congratulation amongst themselves, and would likewise be the incentive of prayer and praise to God. On these occasions of meeting together, all this would chiefly engage their attention it is presumed, more than general and desultory remarks on the works of God in the operations of nature and providence, or even the attributes and perfections of Jehovah, or any theoretical detail of the doctrines of grace in redemption;—the consideration of these subjects at least, not being intended for spiritual profit, but merely to descant on the



works of the great Creator, by way of intellectual gratification. And if the testimony of David have weight, this statement will not be received as mere supposition. "Come and hear," says he, "all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." And what was it that God had done for his soul? Hear his own acknowledgment. "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all

his people."—Ps. lxvi. 16.—cxvi. 1—5.—ciii. 1—5, 8—12.—cxvi. 12—14.

*3rdly*, The audience which God gave them, and the recognition which he took of their assembly. "And the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

*4thly*, The safety, honour, and happiness, which God promises to secure to them. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

*5thly*, And this was not barely a promiscuous and accidental meeting together, when they thus "spake one to another" of the things of God, and of his dealings with their souls; for they "spake *often* one to another." They appear to have met in regular succession at some appointed time and place, for the purpose of attending to this spiritual affair; an affair of too much importance to be left to mere casual interview. And what objection can there be to regularity of meeting, either as to time or place? If the fellowship of saints—experience meetings—class meetings,—call them by what name you please;—if the topics of conversation which are had on these occasions are justifiable at certain times, and rendered profitable to those of the people of God, who enter upon the detail of personal experience; then such narration of religious feeling must be of advantage to all who are of the family of God and the household of faith. And that all may be favoured with such intercourse, a specified time and place for meeting together appear essentially necessary. It then becomes a more solemn and devout exercise, being sanctified by prayer. And surely an hour set apart

once a week, for this religious transaction, cannot be considered too great a proportion of time, nor too often repeated. "Examine yourselves," says the apostle, "whether ye be in the faith." And, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."—2 Cor. xiii. 5.—Heb. iii. 11, 12.—x. 23—25.—Jas. v. 16.

Were it not for a specified time and place of meeting, many would be entirely deprived of this fellowship with their brethren. The situation of life in which they are found, is such, as to seclude the opportunity of a Christian friend calling upon them; and to operate also, so as to forbid their calling at the private residence of some of their brethren. Besides, were this practicable, the opportunity of one might not be a convenient season for the other: business, absence, or the presence of strangers, or those of the family of a contrary disposition, might prevent the mutual intercourse designed. There is a backwardness also in many to interrogate on a subject of this kind, in a promiscuous and apparently abrupt manner. To persons in humble life and of modest diffidence, the task would be painfully felt, from an apprehension that it might not be well received, and

be construed into impertinence, or some other equally improper spirit; however pure in intention the individual might be. The conclusion therefore to which such persons come—as do others from various causes—is, that whose duty soever it may be to elicit the state of mind towards God and Christian experience of certain religious professors, the duty belongs not to them. And thus, from one obstacle or another, this important duty and privilege of acknowledging the work of grace in the heart, would be considerably neglected, if not entirely abandoned, in a Christian society, when left to spontaneous inclination and accidental interview. In which case there would scarcely be found a member of the church capable of satisfactorily determining whether or not, if with the “*form* of godliness,” any of the brethren happily blended “the *power* thereof,” in their experience. Hence, from this ignorance, the prayers of the church, and of individuals for the state of the church, however they might be offered up to God “with the Spirit,” would be materially defective in that which requires that men pray “with the understanding also.”

When objections are raised by persons against speaking on their religious feelings amongst so many in a Class Meeting, such objections ill comport with the practice of the saints in the age of Malachi, and the cordiality of disposition by which the king of Israel was influenced, when he gave a general invitation to all who bore marks of affinity to the family of God, to a spiritual banquet. And if the objector possess any of those moral qualifications which distinguish his alliance to the household of faith and family of God, he is required, by apostolic injunction, to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in

him with meekness and fear." And if to *any man*—any professor of religion—who may think good to interrogate him, how much more ready should he be to give this "reason of the hope" he has attained to a minister of the gospel—or a pious class leader, who does it to afford religious council and advice, and to promote the mutual edification of saints?

Again, there are some who say,—and this is made a ground of objection against meeting in class,—that all who meet in class are not what they ought to be. It must be admitted there is some tangibility in this charge, though not sufficient to justify exemption from this kind of Christian fellowship. To say that all who meet in class are not what they ought to be, induces the enquiry, And pray who is? But what kind of principle is it whence this objection arises? Does it not partake too much of the quality which utters, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou?" Or perhaps it may originate with some in a predilection to uphold an order in society not dissimilar to Hindoo cast;—a disposition in nowise compatible with the genius of the gospel, and which has met with severe reprehension in the epistle of St. James. Be this however as it may, the ostensible reason for not meeting in class,—that many who do meet are not what they ought to be,—may be justifiably retorted by the interrogation; And pray where are the persons who have attained this moral perfection? Have the objectors themselves come up to the standard? If not, why then, the defectiveness of their own character, in not being what they ought to be, allows them but little cause to find fault with others. The step recommended to be taken by a quibbler of this kind, is the one laid down by the Redeemer: "First cast out the beam

out of thine own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

But it is presumed that this is frequently but an invidious insinuation. Most of those persons who meet in class, are more or less sensible it is hoped, of their imperfections and wants; and the design of their meeting is, that by their mutual exercise of prayer and faith, the evils they lament may be vanquished; and that, by the grace of God which is promised to them that wait upon him, they may be made better. And providing there should be found any so decidedly bad,—so hypocritical and designing,—as to assume the mask of religion to attain an end that is altogether mercenary and wicked; yet even a conduct like this, flagrant and much to be deplored as it would be, is not sufficient to invalidate the utility of class meetings:—no more than the gospel ministry is objectionable, because there are many who enter that ministry for purposes of mere wordly gain; and who, Judas-like, "carry the bag." Nor would it involve such a consequence any more than were the members of the first Christian church in Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, freed from the obligation of "continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," because of the covetousness and lying of Ananias and Sapphira. The best of means and institutions are liable to be abused. But it is not the abuse of a thing that warrants its extinction, or demonstrates its inutility. The Methodists are not regardless of what is either decidedly inconsistent, or apparently immoral in any of their members, but elicit investigation where suspicion is entertained; nor are they so lax in discipline as not to award suitable correction for the amendment of

such as are found guilty of a dereliction of moral duty ; and also to inflict expulsion from the community on such as are incorrigible, according to the Rules of the Society, which have been previously introduced to the reader.\*

It has been stated that nothing can be substituted in the place of personal piety, to secure a continuance of the favor of God and the visitations of the efficient agency of the Holy Ghost in a religious society for effecting the conversion of sinners. When a

\* It would be ceding too much to the Methodists to give them credit for originating those means of religious conversation which are after the manner of their Class Meetings : or for reviving them since the days of David, or Malachi, or the Apóstles. For since the Reformation of the English Church, antecedently to Mr. Wesley, such meetings were adopted and encouraged by able and learned ministers both in the Established Church, and out of it. " From the numerous instances of mutual communion, presented by our English parochial clergy, before the act of uniformity, a specimen is selected from the Media of Mr. Isaac Ambrose, sometime minister of Preston, in Lancashire. ' Christians,' says this judicious divine, ' must drive on open and free trade ; they must teach one another the mysteries of godliness. Tell your experience ; and tell your conflicts ; and tell your comforts. As iron sharpeneth iron, as rubbing of the hands maketh both warmer ; and as live coals maketh the rest to burn ; so let the fruit of society be mutually sharpening, warming, and influencing. Christians should also bewail their failings, infirmities, deadness, coldness, narrowness, and unprofitableness, one to another ; to see whether others have been in the same case ; what course they took ; and what remedy they procured. Many souls may perish through too much modesty and reserve. In the prophets' time, when proud scorers talked vainly, and did what they listed, then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. No doubt they spake of God, of his counsels, and of his works and ways ; and of his providence and goodness, and of the baseness of atheistical thoughts. Would Christians thus meet and exchange words and notions, they might build up one another ; they might heat

member of a religious society has been brought to profess faith in Christ, but is not found careful to "continue in the things which he has learned and has been assured of," by progressing in holiness, such a person stands in the church in a similar position to that of a withered branch in the tree, or to that of a diseased and dead member in the body of a man, which renders amputation necessary for the preservation of the life and health of the individual, as that also of the general fruitfulness of the tree. Now class meetings are prudential and necessary means of grace for preserving the body of Methodism in a healthy state;—they tend to promote experimental religion, for as "iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend;"—they detect formal professors, for few will continue long to meet in class who do not possess a taste for spiritual food;—and as they are made a condition of continuance in society, they place in the hand of every member the knife of self-excision. Hence it is that Methodism is rendered so extensively prolific. It is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in

and inflame one another; and they might strengthen and encourage one another as the brethren did St. Paul. And have we not an express command for this duty of conference? "Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, What hath the Lord answered? And what hath he spoken? Jer. xxiii. 35."

"About the year 1677, the awakening sermons of Dr. Horneck, and Dr. Woodward, together with the morning lectures of Mr. Smithies, at Cornhill, were eminently owned in the conversion of many young men. 'These,' says Dr. Woodward, 'soon found the benefit of their conferences one with another, by which (as some of them told me with joy) they better discovered their own corruptions, the devil's temptations, and how to countermine his subtle devices, as to which, each person communicated his experience to the rest.'"—*Sutchiffe on Christian Communion.*



its season; its leaf also does not wither." The peculiarity of its pruning economy, in lopping off with amazing facility its withered and fruitless branches, gives it the aspect of a delightful ever-green; whilst the dew of the Divine blessing, which is caused to fall upon it, makes it to revive, and to be fruitful and flourishing. Little difficulty and unpleasantness will result, as must be perceived, in excluding improper members from the Methodist Society, which is a desideratum to any body of Christians.

Where the heart-searching truths of the gospel are faithfully proclaimed, the people adhering to such a ministry, and imbibing the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the truths to which they listen; the conduct and character of such a people, must have a moral attraction in society of considerable extent; they are "known and read of all men." A society of godly people of this description, actuated by love to the Captain of their salvation, must stand "forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."—May the Lord make the Methodists a thousand times more so than what they are, as well as every Christian denomination in the land.

## CHAPTER II.

### A DIGEST OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

The doctrines propagated by the Methodists, are not distinguished by any thing novel or peculiar. They are "according to godliness;" and such as legitimately belong to the bible, being plainly dictated by the Holy Ghost, and rendered authoritatively binding upon every preacher of the gospel faithfully and explicitly to announce to the people of his charge, that they may be sound in the faith and clear in their views of evangelical truth. As an epitome of the doctrines which form the more general features of the Wesleyan Ministry, might afford some interest to certain persons who may read these pages, the following outline is given.

1. ORIGINAL SIN.—Man was made upright, being created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. In this state of primeval purity, he was free either to stand or fall. Being tempted of the devil to commit evil, and yielding to the insinuation, he lost the perfection of his nature,—the moral likeness of God; and so became "earthly, sensual, devilish." There is nothing now to be found in man that is morally good by nature. Whatever there may be in him that is praiseworthy and of good report, cometh from another source,—it cometh from above. Apart from grace, no man possesses either power to will or power to do that which is good. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only

evil continually." "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." "There is none righteous, no, not one." "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." "The heart is deceitful above all things; and desperately wicked: who can know it?"—Gen. vi. 5. Rom. v. 19.—iii. 10. Psalm ii. 5. Jer. xvii. 9.

2. REDEMPTION.—Through the transgression of our first parents, the penalty of death was entailed upon themselves and their posterity in the infliction of divine vengeance to all eternity. As the attributes of God are infinitely perfect, his mercy could not be displayed towards the guilty culprits at the expense of justice, in pardoning the offence and restoring them to their forfeited privileges. To effect this benefit for a ruined world, an equivalent to the claims of divine justice must be provided; and as the nature of sin was such as to involve infinite consequences, being committed against the person and government of an infinitely holy, just, and righteous God, it required the advancement of a price that was equally meritorious. The Lord Jesus Christ, the second person in the Holy Trinity,—the Son of God, who alone in heaven possessed a sufficiency of merit for the accomplishment of the noble object, volunteered his services as the world's Redeemer, which were accepted on the part of the Father. Hence, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons." "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." By the free-will offering of the second free-agent Adam from above, the first free-agent Adam and his posterity, were redeemed from the bondage and misery of sin to which they became subjected by voluntary disobedience. The death of Jesus Christ was a vicarious sacrifice,—a sin-atonement offering, and an oblation and sacrifice to God for the sins of the whole world. His blood was the ransom price paid down to the claims of justice, "that God might be just" whilst he "justifieth the ungodly." It was the Father who smote him in the garden and on the tree. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The virtue of the blood of Christ, as the ransom price, was all-sufficient and complete, and equally designed for the whole human family. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—In this statement there is redemption by *price*; but there is also redemption by *power*. Jesus Christ as the Redeemer, not only laid down his life to meet the demands of justice in the place of the culprit; but he delivers the captive from the

chains and fetters which bind him, and out of the hands of all his enemies. He frees the sinner from the bondage of sin and Satan, and "proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." By his death he has obtained a right in the sons of men; and by his resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven, captivity he has led captive; and there he asserts his right by exerting his power in effecting the emancipation of sinners from the galling yoke of iniquity, and the oppression of the world, the flesh, and the devil; that being freed from this bondage, they might serve God in righteousness and true holiness. "He shall save his people from their sins." "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This is merited by his blood, which has procured the rich influences of grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," &c. The redemption *power* will ultimately be made to bear upon the body also. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."—Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 16. 1 Peter i. 18, 19. Romans iii. 26.—iv.

5. Zech. xiii. 7. James liii. 4, 5, 6. Rom. v. 18.  
 1 John ii. 2. Matt. i. 21. Acts iii. 26. 1 John iii.  
 8. Tit. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 1—28. 1 Cor. xv. 26.  
 Phil. iii. 21. Hosea xiii. 14.

3. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—The saving benefits which arise from the death of Jesus Christ, are not realised until a sinner cordially believes the record of God concerning his Son. Faith in Christ, and faith alone, is the instrumental medium of reception. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;" whilst "he that believeth not," whatever his conduct may be in other respects, "is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." In the economy of grace, the faith which a sinner exercises on the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, is put in the place of obedience to the law for acceptance with God. For if man, accused of transgression, were even capable of keeping the law perfect in future, and equally disposed so to do, this obedience would not cancel the debt which had been incurred by former offences; so that "present for past can ne'er atone." But he is totally without ability to do what is acceptable to God: Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." The order of God with man in his primitive state was, "This do, and thou shalt live." But in his present fallen state, in the covenant of redemption, God speaks on this wise, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The treatment that a sinner meets with from God, on his believing on the Lord

Jesus Christ with his heart unto righteousness, is, that he justifies him freely from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. In justification, God changes the condition of a sinner; turns aside from him his threatened wrath, and pardons all the sins he has committed, and receives him graciously. He is then treated as an innocent person, and as though he had never transgressed; no account being now taken of former offences, having them cast as a stone into the great deep to be remembered no more. It is not however a legal justification, on the ground of innocence, or the want of evidence to substantiate the charges of guilt which are preferred against the sinner; but an evangelical justification, through the merciful interposition of a Surety, and the acceptance of that Surety on the part of the sinner. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."—Rom. iv. 5. John iii. 18. Jer. xiii. 23. Rom. x. 4.—v. 1, 2.—iv. 6, 7.

4. REGENERATION AND ADOPTION.—These are twin doctrines of justification. They are blessings separate and distinct from each other, and also from pardon, but are always consequent upon justification. Whilst justification, or the forgiveness of sins, changes the *condition* of a sinner, REGENERATION changes his *character*. "Being born again, not of

corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Faith unites the sinner to the Saviour, whence a vital union takes place, which produces a transformation of character. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."—ADOPTION changes the *relationship* of the sinner. Previously to his conversion he was a child of wrath and hell, but is now constituted, by adoption and grace, a child of God. And sustaining this affinity to God and the family of heaven, the Holy Spirit bears his attestation to it, directly witnessing to his heart that God loves him, having forgiven him all his iniquities; and by this testimony he feels that God owns him as his child. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."—1 Peter i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 17. Titus iii. 5, 6, 7. Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 24. .

5. REPENTANCE.—Evangelical repentance which always precedes and accompanies the act of faith in



justification, is a gracious disposition whereby a sinner turns to God in contrition of spirit, from a sense of sin both of heart and life, confessing the same whilst imploring mercy. True repentance is always distinguished by a hatred to sin, a turning from it, and a fixed determination to avoid it and all occasions of it in future. Repentance is designated "godly sorrow." "Ye were made sorry after a godly manner. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." It is produced by the Spirit of God, which convinces us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; it leads the mind to God; and induces an acknowledgment of sin as committed *against* God. But it is not in any degree meritorious; neither is it the means of the actual attainment of salvation. It prepares the mind for the reception of mercy, and which is realised by an act of faith exerted on the part of the penitent sinner. The fallow ground of the heart is broken up by penitence and contrition, in which process of moral culture it is fitted to receive the seed of the heavenly kingdom. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "God commandeth all men every where to repent."—2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. Is. lxvi. 2. Joel ii. 13. Mark i. 15. Luke xiii. 3. Acts xvii. 30.

6. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION & CHRISTIAN PERFECTION—Sanctification and Perfection are ambiguous terms and convey different significations, and are

often used in the scriptures in various senses, both as to things and moral character and purity. But by attaching the qualities of *Christian* and *entire* to the substantive form, a significant and definite meaning is given, which may easily be perceived and cannot well be mistaken. And for the use of which adjectives the authority of inspiration is legitimately inferred. To *sanctify* signifies to separate, to set apart, and to appoint any thing to a holy use. Gen. ii. 3. Ezk. xiii. 2. Heb. x. 14. When applied to the grace of God in personal experience, it refers, in the lowest sense, to a penitent sinner who is led to separate himself from all outward sin and the company of wicked persons, and to devote himself to the service of God. So far he is sanctified, being set apart for the Master's use. In justification and regeneration he is farther sanctified, in the removal of the guilt and power of sin, by the blood of Christ and mighty operations of the Spirit of purity. By *entire* sanctification, is therefore to be understood the increase and extension of the saving grace of God received in justification, to the complete renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness after the image of God.\* It is admitted, that in general on a person being first regenerated, when all the graces of the

\* "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3.—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. li. 10.—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Thus saith the Lord God; I

Spirit in a diminutive sense are implanted in the newborn soul, there still remains, though latent it may be for awhile, the seeds of sin's disease;—that the carnal mind has existence;—that inbred depravity more or less defiles and pollutes the inner-man. But he who has so far effected the change *can* perfect it in the entire destruction of the man of sin; for such is the omnipotency of the grace of Jesus Christ, as well as the virtue of his blood, that “he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” St. Paul directs the attention of the church at Thessalonica to this blessing, and exhibits it as a privilege to the members of that church who had not then attained it, and prays to God himself on behalf of their *entire* sanctification. “And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” The duties which the apostle had previously enjoined, were of such a nature as at once to shew the necessity of the grace to perform them. See 1 Thes. v. 14—24. Heb. vii. 25.

This blessing is obtained by the instrumentality of faith, and precisely in the same way as justifica-

will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” Ezk. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27, 37.—“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” “If we say that we have no sin,”—have never transgressed, and so neither need pardon nor cleansing,—“we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar,”—who has declared that all have sinned,—“and his word is not in us.” 1 John i. 7—10.

tion was attained. The penitent believes for pardon; and the sensibly unholy is required to believe for purity. "According to your faith be it unto you." "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." And "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." God has promised purity: "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." "Be not afraid, only believe," and thou shalt "see the salvation of God." The sentiment of the poet in the following lines, is expressive of the feelings of a sincere seeker of entire sanctification, and of the correctness of his views of the blessing itself:—

"O thou, to whose all-searching sight,  
The darkness shineth as the light,  
Search, prove my heart; it pants for thee;  
O burst these bonds, and set it free!

"Wash out its stains, refine its dross,  
Nail my affections to the cross;  
Hallow each thought; let all within  
Be clean, as thou, my Lord, art clean!"

"Be ye holy; for I am holy." None need question the possibility of attaining to this state of holiness, providing it be but sought for perseveringly and with the whole heart; for he "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."\*

\* Matt. ix. 29.—viii. 6, 7, 13.—xv. 28. Mark x. 52. 2 Peter i. 4. 2 Cor. i. 20. Mark xi. 24. Joel iii. 21. Mark v. 36. 1 Peter i. 16. Ep. iii. 20.

“Thy powerful Spirit shall subdue  
 Unconquerable sin,  
 Cleanse this foul heart, and make it new,  
 And write thy law within.”

As a stimulus to exertion in the use of means it is exhibited in a variety of forms in the word of God:—by promises—prophecies—prayers—precedents—exhortations—commandments—expostulations. The character and offices which Jesus Christ sustains are a sufficient guarantee to insure success to every one that determinately engages in the laudable enterprise of dispossessing the enemies of God of the citadel of man-soul, and of taking full possession of the spiritual Canaan.

“O that I might at once go up !  
 No more on this side Jordan stop,  
 But now the land possess :  
 This moment end my legal years ;  
 Sorrows, and sins, and doubts and fears,  
 A howling wilderness.

“Now, O my Joshua, bring me in !  
 Cast out thy foes ; the inbred sin,  
 The carnal mind remove ;  
 The purchase of thy death divide ;  
 And O ! with all the sanctified  
 Give me a lot of love !”

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION signifies the same state as entire sanctification. It is denominated *christian* perfection to distinguish it from the absolute perfection of Deity, and from angelic and Adamic perfection. It is a perfection which accords with the dispensation under which man is placed as a redeemed creature and probationer for eternity. This grace is attained when the soul arises to a certain climax in holiness,

“Where fear, and sin, and grief expire,  
 Cast out by perfect love.”

It is emphatically, PERFECT LOVE;—the love of God perfected in the soul, to the exclusion of all the opposites of love; extirpating from the breast every degree of slavish and tormenting fear, and which destroys the grief or sorrow of the world which worketh death. St. John has stated the doctrine of Christian Perfection in language both clear and definite, in the 4th chapter of his 1st epistle, where he says, “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. And this commandment have we from him,\* That he who loveth God, love his brother also.” He that has attained to this love has attained christian perfection. And none need be under alarm when a person professes to have received this degree of holiness or perfection, from a suspicion that it is calculated to generate pride, or some other equally dangerous passion. Sin is the originating cause of pride, and every other repugnant quality, whether it appear in such as make profession of religion or are of no profession. The

\* “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”—Matt. xxii. 37—40. 1 John iv. 11.—iii. 11, 14, 18, 23. Lev. xix. 18. Mark xii. 29—33. Luke x. 37. John xiii. 34, 35.—xv. 12. Rom. xii. 9, 10.—xiii. 9, 10. Gal. v. 6, 14. 1 Thes. iv. 9. 1 Peter iii.—iv. 8.

less, therefore, of sin a person has, the less he will have of pride. And if he be saved from all sin, he will be saved from all pride. And by the grace of God reigning in his heart, he will "rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; and in every thing give thanks," ascribing all the glory to God who hath wrought this great work in him. So far from increasing pride, is an extended degree of holiness, that it is stated, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;" and is moreover defined, as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."—Gal. v. 22, 23. Ephesians v. 9.\*

When a believer makes profession of the enjoyment of perfect love, finding nothing contrary to this fruit of the Spirit in himself,—and his conduct evinces a correspondency of evidence, his testimony claims the credence of his brethren. It is admitted, however, that it is possible to be mistaken as to the actual attainment of pure love, and that even by some who nevertheless may be sincere in what they state of the gracious acquirements they have made, and who may feel at the time, and for awhile, no-

\* Consult the following passages which refer to perfection. Gen. xvii. 1. Job. i. 1. Ps. xxxvii. 37. Prov. xi. 5. Matt. v. 48. 2 Cor. xiii. 9. 11.—vii. 1. Ep. i. 4.—iv. 13, &c. Col. i. 28.—iv. 12. 1 Thes. iii. 10—13. 2 Tim. iii. 17. Heb. vi. 1.—xii. 23.—xiii. 21. 1 Peter v. 10. Jas. i. 4.—The metaphor of a building is perhaps the most apt illustration of the great doctrine and privilege of christian perfection; and is employed by the apostle in various parts of his writings; "that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God;" "and this also we wish, even your perfection:" the original term, rendered "perfection," obviously meaning *well-jointed*; or as architects phrase it, *dove-tailed*.

thing contrary to love in their hearts either to God or to man. But the influence of love which they feel is too superficial to reach the extremity of sinful infection, and to cure all the evils of the heart. It is not sufficiently deep and hallowing. Certain "roots of bitterness" may still exist which lie hidden and concealed, and which will be found to shoot up when correspondent trials and temptations exert their influence upon these remains of infected nature. Notwithstanding this mistake, such persons are not to be discouraged, but should hold fast the degree of good which they possess, whilst the development of the remains of the carnal mind, which these exercises have exposed, will increase their knowledge and lead them to the possession of the perfect blessing in which they find themselves deficient, by a proper application to the appointed scriptural remedy. On this subject much prudence is required. The apostle's direction in doubtful cases of this kind should be regarded. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall even reveal this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."\*—Phil. iii. 15, 16.

\* "The essence of Christian perfection is simplicity and purity; one design, one desire,—entire devotion to God. Simplicity of intention and purity of affection, one design in all we speak or do, and one desire ruling all our tempers, are indeed the wings of the soul, without which we can never ascend to the mount of God. A will steadily and uniformly devoted to God is essential to a state of sanctification; but not a uniformity of joy, or peace, or happy communion with God. These may rise or fall in various degrees; nay, and be affected either by the body, or by diabolical agency, in a manner which all our wisdom can neither



7. GOOD WORKS.—Although a sinner is justified by faith alone without the deeds of the law, yet faith is not opposed to the law. The decalogue or ten commandments are not given to man in his fallen state as a *condition* of justification, but are to be regarded as a *rule* of life. Good works are properly the fruit of saving faith. “A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good. “The tree is known by its fruit.” All works therefore which are done before a person is justified, are not only destitute of merit, but are not acceptable to God. They will tend nothing to his account at the day of judgment, for they contain in them the nature of sin, not being done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done. But such works as are pleasing to God are naturally consequent upon faith—the faith that works by love and purifies the heart; and are a fruit which cannot be dispensed with; for “faith if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” And works of this kind, whilst “profitable to men are acceptable to God.” And they are such as will accompany the believer to the bar of God; when according to the extent and quality of them he shall be rewarded. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the works of the Lord, forasmuch

understand nor prevent.—Entire holiness does not exclude growth. There is no such perfection in this life as implies either a dispensation from doing good, and attending all the ordinances of God; or a freedom from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand infirmities necessarily connected with flesh and blood. Setting perfection too high is the ready way to drive it out of the world. There cannot be a lasting steady enjoyment of pure love, without the direct testimony of the Spirit concerning it; without God's Spirit shining on his own work.”—*Wesley*.

as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." "For if these things be in you, and abound," &c. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand," &c. The parable of the talents shews the equity of God's dealings with his creatures, and of his righteous proceedings, which will take place at the consummation of all things, in the distribution of rewards amongst his people for the improvement which they had made of his own gifts; and in which gracious recompense, will be taken in consideration most probably, the mind and intention also, where opportunity was not allowed to work for God.—Consult Matt. xxv. 31.—46. 1 Cor. xv. 58. 2 Cor. ix. 6. 2 Peter i. 8.—11. Rev. xiv. 13.

8. FINAL PERSEVERANCE.—As the probationary state of a saint does not terminate until he finishes the conquest at death, it is indispensable for the continuance of a sense of the divine approbation and his ultimate admission into heaven, that he faithfully persevere to the end of life "by patient continuance in well doing seeking for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Jude exhorts, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves

in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The spiritual life enjoyed by the saints is through union with Jesus Christ, who is the true and living vine. This life can only be maintained whilst this union is continued. And the medium of union is faith. If faith, therefore, be relinquished or cast away, or a person cease to believe, the union of the soul with Christ subsides, and spiritual life becomes extinct. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." But whilst the *possibility* of falling from grace is admitted on a fair interpretation of scripture, it is also allowed on the same authority that there is no *necessity* for it. And it is also sufficiently clear, from the same infallible guide, that it is not only possible to sustain a partial fall from the saving grace of God, but to fall from the highest attainments of grace;—and to fall so foully as to be irrecoverably lost. Every sound Methodist utters as his sentiment on this subject,—

"Ah, Lord, with trembling I confess,  
A gracious soul may fall from grace :  
The salt may lose its seasoning power,  
And never, never find it more.

"Lest that my fearful case should be,  
Each moment knit my soul to thee ;  
And lead me to the mount above,  
Through the low vale of humble love."

"Ye are the salt of the earth," says the Redeemer ;  
"but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall  
it be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but  
to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men."

“Now the just shall live by faith : but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Many in the apostolic churches became deliberate apostates by listening to seducing teachers and from fear of persecution. They abjured Christ, and denied the only Lord God who bought them ; (2 Peter ii. 1. Jude iv. 2. Tim. iv. 3;) therefore, the case of such was utterly without remedy : there being no other way by which atonement for sin either is or can be made. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” “Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Ordinary backsliders, however, from the ways of God are not deprived of the possibility of restoration to the Divine favor ; but great encouragement is held out to persons who are in such a state, and who feel and lament their folly, to return to him from whom they have revolted, with the assurance that he “will heal their backslidings” and “will love them freely.” “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.”\*

It is admitted on all sides that the perseveringly wicked and all unregenerate sinners will be excluded the kingdom of God and cast into hell : by parity of reason, therefore, and by the declaration of scripture as well ; “Of how much sorer punishment,

\* Rom. ii. 7. Jude xx. 21. Gal. ii. 20. Matt. v. 13. Heb. x. 38.—x. 26. 1 Cor. iii. Acts iv. 11. Hosea xvi. 1.

suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" In the 28th and 33rd chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel, the equity of God both towards the penitent sinner putting away his iniquity, and the apostatizing professor turning from his righteousness, is clearly stated and defended. The conduct of the house of Israel being such as to raise objections to this plan of the divine economy, and particularly to its application in the latter case,—entertaining as they did, the idea of an unconditional election of certain persons, and especially of themselves,—the Almighty condescends to repeat his previous statements by way of expostulation; and meets the quibbling objections which they advanced, and the deep rooted prejudices which they entertained in favor of "once in grace always in grace," in language at once both clear and conclusive; (chapter xviii. 25, 26;) "Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." Both natural and eternal death are expressed in this passage: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and *dieth* in them;"—here natural death is expressed. Then it is added as a subsequent event; "for his iniquity that he hath done shall he *die*;"—here eternal death is implied.

That was a solemn charge which David, when stricken in years, gave to his illustrious and pious

descendant, who was to succeed him in the government of his kingdom: "And thou, Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." Did he not forsake God? His departure from the holy commandment given unto him was distinguished by five progressive acts of flagrant disobedience. Moses had expressly prohibited the multiplying of horses; (Deut. xvii. 16;) by which the future king was forbidden to establish a body of cavalry, because this could not be effected without sending into Egypt, with which people God had forbidden any communication, as this would be dangerous to religion. When Solomon had violated this law, and multiplied horses to excess, (1 Kings iv. 16,) it was soon attended with the fatal consequences that the law foretold: for this wisest of kings having likewise, in violation of *another* law, married Pharaoh's daughter, (the early fruits of this commerce;) and then by a repetition of the same crime, but the transgression of *another* law, had espoused more strange women, (1 Kings iv. 26.—xi. 1;) they first, in defiance of a *fourth* law, persuaded him to build them idol temples for *their* use; and afterwards, against a *fifth* law, brought him to build other temples for *his own*. Thus the beginning of evil is like the letting out of waters; and this great man so eminently wise and holy at the commencement of his reign, is found at the latter end of it encouraging and addicting himself to the most debasing acts of idolatry, (1 Kings xi. 1, &c., 2 Kings xxiii. 13.) What an awful memorial is that

which is made of the downfall of this prince by that faithful and determinate reformer of the Jews, Nehemiah. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives." A dark and gloomy shade is cast over the exit of Solomon. A similar gloom envelops the closing scene of the life of Asa and Uzziah as given by the sacred penman. The early life and latter end of those princes display a contrast of character which is truly affecting, and concerning whose restoration to piety no encouragement of hope is afforded.

It is no pleasing task, however, if the attempt be possible, or even lawful, to demonstrate the eternal loss of the soul of any particular individual. To prosecute an enquiry into this tremendously awful subject too far, would be to invade the right of Omniscience: it being a subject properly connected with those "secret things" which "belong unto the Lord our God." But whilst the endless perdition of particular persons should with humility be conceded, it is a "revealed" truth,—to maintain which a lawful contention is justifiable,—that a "brother" *may* "perish for whom Christ died;—that it was needful for a holy apostle to "keep under his body, and bring it into subjection; lest by any means, when he had preached to others, himself should be a castaway;"—that as it is possible for the branch of a tree once alive and fruitful to become fruitless, withered, and dead; so it is possible for a believer

in Jesus Christ to be reduced to a similar condition; and in a similar way to be treated with the blighted and unproductive branch. The Saviour asserts; "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." And it is possible to act in such a way, after having the name inscribed in "the book of life," as to incur its obliteration: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Who does not see that a name must first be written in a book before it can be blotted out? Disobedience, originating in unbelief, is the cause of blotting out of the book of life, or of excision from the living vine.\*

It was through sin that the angels fell from a state

\* "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."—Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22. Jer. ii. 13. Is. lix. 2. Ex. xxxii. 33. Rev. iii. 5.—xxii. 19. John xv. 1, 6.



of grace or favor, and who remain irrecoverably fallen. Adam fell from a similar condition of grace, and probably was restored to the favor of God. Solomon, Asa, and Uzziah departed from a state of grace; and Hymeneous and Alexander, with some others, "concerning faith had made shipwreck." Of the restoration of these, the scriptures which declare their fall, are entirely silent. They are left as beacons to caution others against too near approach to the rocks of error and sin, and the quicksands of sloth and formality; lest they also, by such means,—instead of "holding faith and a good conscience,"—should "put away" this grace, and make "shipwreck." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." May not every believer devoutly exclaim,—

" Uphold me, Saviour, or I fall ;  
O reach me out thy gracious hand !  
Only on thee for help I call :  
Only by faith in thee I stand."

Why is it that any should oppose the *possibility* of falling from grace ? It cannot be from any reason or evidence that God has more regard for those who only *partially* bear his image, than he had for those who were entirely free from moral evil and natural disability, as were the angels and man at their first formation ? The infallible assurance of abiding in the love of God, having been initiated into it either by absolute predestination before the individuals have done good or harm, or by the scriptural process of repentance and faith, appears to be inferred and then asserted from the absolute form which many of the promises assume as made to the people of God, being led to overlook the condition which is implied

in them though not expressed. The bible cannot contradict itself. That many promises of present salvation and future glory are highly conditional is clear. Then it must be equally clear that when a promise of safety in a state of grace and eternal life is given in an unconditional form, a condition is implied. And that this is the case is certain from what the Almighty has declared himself, which may be seen by turning to 1 Sam. ii. 30. "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy fathers, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."\* A contention for this interpretation of scripture, should arise purely for the maintenance of "the form of sound words," and for the practical consequences which arise out of it, and not merely to support a favorite hypothesis.

The doctrine which favors the *possibility* of falling from grace, is made to properly adjust "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." The right hand armour, obtains "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins,"—the direct witness of the Spirit to pardon and acceptance with God,—the "full assurance of faith,"—and all the heights and depths of humble love. The left hand armour protects in the enjoyment of what the right hand armour obtains; and that by prayer,—watchfulness,—the constant exercise of faith,—and a diligent and persevering use of all the means of

\* See also 2 Chron. xv. 2. Jer. xviii. 9, 10. Num. xiv. 22, 23. The passages quoted in this article from the New Testament are of the same character.

grace. When christian professors are thus found equipt, and in the proper exercise of this right hand and left hand armour, they are made thereby so that they "shall never fall;" but "an entrance shall be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

9. FREE-WILL.—It is often argued, that if the final perseverance of the saints depend upon their own choice, it derogates from the glory of Christ, by making salvation subservient to human effort. That man possesses *freedom of will* is admitted, but the consequence is denied. To deny to the *will* the liberty of choice or refusal in moral subjects, is to debase man to *necessity*. And necessity has no law. Those who do this to avoid, what they would interpret, the sacrilegious act of taking glory to themselves in the salvation they profess to have attained, run into the blasphemous extreme, if not intentionally yet necessarily, of making God the author of all the evil and sin there are in the world; and hence follows that absurdity, that, as God can do nothing that is *wrong*, WHATEVER IS, *is* RIGHT. But is there no alternative against necessity on the one hand, by depriving man of liberty of choice; and on the other of robbing God of the glory of his grace, by allowing to man the freedom of will? There is. But what is the human will? It is a faculty of the soul, and is dependant on the understanding for the legitimate acts of choosing and refusing. But it is often influenced and misguided in its choice by passion, as also by wrong judgment. Now supposing perfect freedom to be allowed to the will, the choice of good upon which it may determine, neither *necessitates* nor *merits* salvation. Both the provision and offer

of salvation exclusively belong to God; and as touching which, every sinner has forfeited all legal claim. And beyond the procuring medium of salvation, in the sacrificial death of Christ, and the proclamation of it by a preached gospel, the sinner is dependant on the Almighty for the gracious influences of the Spirit to enlighten the understanding and impress the heart with a sense of sin and its consequences; and to enable the mind also to discover the proper nature and importance of religious truth: by which sacred discoveries and gracious operations, the will is rendered capable—and without such assistances it is not capable—of choosing good and refusing evil. The *ability* therefore to will good comes from God. But God does not perform the act of choosing for man, nor does he irresistably compel him to will. This is left to man's own determination. And upon *this hinge* turns the acceptance or rejection of a sinner. But in connexion with free grace to *will* that which is good, man is dependant on God also for grace to *perform* what the will approves. St. Paul personifies the state of an unregenerate man under the influence of an awakened conscience, in the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans, where he describes him as approving of the law of God, whilst he laments his inability to perform it, and that on account of the reigning power of sin and inward depravity.\* God has promised power to overcome the dominion of sin, to such as seek it

\* “For to will is present with me : but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man :

from a sense of their own helplessness. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."\* The means to attain it must be used; and when acquired, must be faithfully improved. For God will no more *obey* for man, than he will *choose* for him; but he gives the *power* to do both. The apostle to the Philippians sets the subject in a clear light. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." As the *power* to *will* and the *power* to *do*, come from God; so the *act* of *volition* and the *act* of *doing*, belong to man;—therefore, whilst God works, man is called upon to co-work, and that in working out his own salvation.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" A heathen made a similar acknowledgment of his bondage to sin, to this description given by the apostle, where he states—

My *reason* this, my *passion* that persuades;  
I see the *right*, and I approve it too;  
Condemn the *wrong*, and yet the *wrong* *pursue*.

\* Deut. xxxiii. 25. "And as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Psalm xxix. ii. "The Lord will give strength unto his people."

Psalm lxviii. 35. "The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people."

Psalm cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."

Is. xi. 10. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."—xli. 10.—xlv. 24

1 Cor. x. 13. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temp-

The gracious influence which is afforded the will in aiding the determination of choice, is not to be considered as superabounding towards those who are saved, to what it is towards them that are lost. The Spirit operates upon the minds of all men with righteous equality,—“of his” own “good pleasure,”—giving to some one, to others three, and to others five talents; but to all a sufficiency for the purposes of attaining salvation, according to the dispensation in which they live; at the same time requiring of each no more than the usury of what has been imparted, and punishing in proportion to the abuse of opportunities and privileges afforded.—And can there be more of glory secured to God over creatures who are

tation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness, Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Eph. iii. 16. “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”—vi. 10. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

John xv. 5. “For without me ye can do nothing.”—Compare this declaration with Phil. iv. 11, 12, 13. “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Col. i. 10, 11, 12. “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

necessitatedly and irresistably saved, than over such as accept of his beneficent offers of salvation; and who otherwise must have been eternally lost, had they not chosen to avail themselves of the gracious offer afforded them? None at all; nor so much. And it is only upon the latter plan that the ways of God can be justified with men.

Young says,—

“Heav’n wills our happiness, allows our doom;—  
 Invites us ardently,—but not compels :  
 Heav’n but persuades ; almighty man decrees ;  
 Man is the maker of immortal fates :  
 Man falls by man, if finally he falls ;  
 And fall he must, who learns from death alone  
 The dreadful secret—that he lives for ever !”

Milton says,—

“Man shall not quite be lost, but sav’d who will ;  
 Yet not of will in him, but grace in me  
 Freely vouchsaf’d : Once more I will renew  
 His lapsed pow’rs, tho’ forfeit, and intrall’d  
 By sin to foul exorbitant desires ;  
 Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand  
 On even ground against his mortal foe ;  
 By me upheld, that he may know how frail  
 His fall’n condition is, and to me owe  
 All his deliv’rance, and to none but me.  
 Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,  
 Elect above the rest ;\* so is my will :  
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn’d  
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes  
 The’ incensed Deity, while offer’d grace  
 Invites ; for I will clear their senses dark,  
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts

\* No objection can be made to this, if Milton allow with “peculiar grace, elect above the rest,” proportionable responsibility. St. Paul was chosen of peculiar grace; but notwithstanding his remarkable conversion and revelations, and extraordinary abilities, he was necessitated to “keep under his body and bring it under subjection; lest,” as he remarks, “that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”—1 Cor. ix. 27.

To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.  
 To pray'r, repentance, and obedience due,  
 Tho' but endeavour'd with sincere intent,  
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.  
 And I will place within them as a guide,  
 My umpire Conscience; whom if they will hear,  
 Light after light, well us'd, they shall attain,  
 And to the end persisting, safe arrive.  
 This my long suff'rance, and my day of grace;  
 They who neglect and scorn shall never taste;  
 But hard be harden'd; blind be blinded more,  
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;  
 And none but such from mercy I exclude."

Jehovah says,—“Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”—Prov. i. 24—33.

10. ETERNAL REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.—The thinking or intellectual part of man,—his spirit, is immaterial and immortal; and will exist in pleasure or in pain to all eternity. The body, which is the



habitation of the soul and the only instrument by which it acts in the present state, will die and return to the dust whence it came, as a part of the consequence entailed upon man on account of original transgression. But whilst the human frame commingles after death with the different elements of which it was composed, the identical body of every individual will be raised again at the last day. In the morning of the resurrection, "the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." It was allowed by the Jews, and asserted by the apostle, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;" when a reunion of soul and body will take place, that the whole man may participate in the joys, or share in the miseries, which will be awarded each individual by the Judge of quick and dead; and will be in proportion to the degree of holiness or sinfulness which designated their character during the state of their probation. But whatever the *degree* of bliss or pain may be, the duration will be *everlasting*. Of the wicked it is said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." No doubt whatever is entertained that the righteous will enter upon a perpetuity of happiness in the eternal world. Nor need there be any hope indulged that the wicked will ever escape the Divine indignation which they will be called to sustain in the bottomless pit of woe into which they will be cast when "the great day of his wrath is come." The awfully sublime appearances and terrible displays of righteous judgment, which will be ushered in and executed on that day, are given by St. Paul in the following descriptive language: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall

be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God," &c. 2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9, 10. The same terms in both cases are frequently used in scripture to express the endless duration of the condition both of saints and sinners, and that without mitigation of pain to the latter, or the suppression of bliss to the former. Whilst "in the presence of God there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore;" there are to be endured, in the prison-house of hell, the knowings of "their worm that dieth not," and the torture of "the fire that is not quenched."

Both from parity of reason and scripture, there is not the faintest shadow of evidence that there will be a restoration of the damned, from the pit of perdition to which they are consigned. There is no promise of a saviour made to them; but on the contrary, assurances of being left to their fate without hope. "The redemption of their soul is precious and it ceaseth for ever." "The hypocrite's hope shall perish." "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Sin is of infinite magnitude, being committed against the government of an infinitely holy and just God; and required a sacrifice of atonement equivalent in value to the nature and extent of human transgression. That sacrifice having been provided, to neglect which, during the only period it is rendered available, must necessarily involve the delinquent in a state of misery and ruin that is interminable. And as apostate spirits will be left destitute of all gracious influence, the turpitude of their nature will be left without restraint; and as their hostility to God will be ceaseless, so a correspondent infliction

of punishment will be invoked and awarded. The only alternative of restoration from endless misery, is annihilation; and this is as contrary to the apparent necessity of continued existence, as it is unauthorised by scripture. The duration therefore of the being and miseries of the lost, will be as boundless as eternity.

“Infinite years in torments must I spend,  
 And never—never—never have an end!  
 O! must I dwell in torturing despair,  
 As many years as atoms in the air?  
 When these are done, as many to ensue,  
 As blades of grass on hills and dales that grew?  
 When these are gone, as many left behind  
 As leaves in forests shaken with the wind?  
 When these are past, as many thousands more  
 As grains of sand upon the ocean shore?  
 When these run out, as many on the march  
 As starry lamps that gild the spangled arch?  
 When these are past, as many left behind  
 As leaves in forests shaken with the wind?  
 When these are gone, as many thousands more  
 As moments in the millions past before?  
 When all these doleful years are spent in pain,  
 And multiplied by millions yet again,  
 ’Till numbers drown the thought;—could I suppose  
 That then my wretched years would have a close,  
 This would afford a hope! but oh! I shiver  
 To ponder on that dreadful word—*for EVER!*  
 The burning gulph where I blaspheming lie,  
 Is *time no more*, but vast *ETERNITY!*  
 The growing torments I endure for sin,  
 Are never more to end but always to begin!  
 O that the hand which cursed me with the lash,  
 Would bless me back to nothing, with a dash.  
 Unjustly, I the sin-avenger hate;  
 Blaspheme this awful God, and curse my fate.  
 ’Tis *just!* since I who bear the eternal load,  
 Contemn’d the *death* of an *ETERNAL GOD!*”

### CHAPTER III.

#### SOME ACCOUNT OF MR. WESLEY.

WHETHER Methodism be perpetuated in its present integral form through the lapse of ages, or should blend its appellation and reputed peculiarities with any other form of Christianity better suited for universal adoption,—if a uniform mode of divine worship and church discipline be intended by the Great Head of the church,—the name of JOHN WESLEY will be had in everlasting remembrance, as one of the most illustrious philanthropists that his country or the church of God ever produced.

By way of regarding order, and for the advantage of reference as to data and general memoranda, a brief outline of the life and character of the founder of the united societies of the Methodist Connexion, will commence the particulars of this chapter. But the reader who is a stranger to the history of this eminently great man, and who may wish to possess correct evidence for the formation of a just estimate of his worth, is earnestly requested to read his Journals, the product of his own pen; which will furnish the intelligent enquirer with the most suitable information. The best and most authentic history of Mr. Wesley it must be allowed are his Journals. His life also, by Watson, may be consulted with advantage. It comprises a condensation of the leading circumstances of his protracted and eventful life; and presents the reader with a clear statement of the principles of Mr. Wesley, and an able defence of

his character and proceedings in general against the misrepresentations of others, and of the virulent attacks of individuals and bigotted party assailants.

As a plausible reason to admit a sketch of the life of Mr. Wesley into this work, he was not only the reputed head of the Methodist body, but also a native of Lincolnshire, and of that part of the county to which the Grantham circuit belonged at the first formation of circuits. The preachers stationed at Epworth, previously to Gainsborough becoming a circuit, extended their labours as far as Great Gonerby and Grantham, so that these two places were once included in the Epworth circuit. But this will be noticed afterwards in proper order.

The REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M., was the second son of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where he was born on the 17th of June, 1703. Although his father was a man of considerable literary attainments, and presented an example of all that could render a clergyman respectable and influential, yet it was to his mother, a woman of a masculine understanding, of extraordinary zeal and active character, that he was indebted for his early education, and probably also for the seeds of many of his distinguished mental habits. She was particularly led, it would seem, to interest herself in John, somewhat more than in any other of her children, the number of whom amounted to thirteen. This extra interest she felt for her second son, arose out of a providential and singular escape which he experienced when he was about six years old, from being burned to death, upon the parsonage house being consumed. It appears that the parishioners of his father were very profligate, and the zeal with which he discharged his duties excited in

them a spirit of hatred so violent, that they set his house on fire. Mr. Wesley was then roused by the cry of fire from the street : but little imagining that it was his own house, he opened the door and found it full of smoke, and that the roof was burnt through. Directing his wife and the two eldest girls to rise and shift for their lives, he burst open the nursery door, where the maid was sleeping with five children. She snatched up the youngest and bade the others follow her : the three eldest did so ; but John in the alarm was forgotten. The rest of the family escaped ; some through the windows, some by the garden door ; and Mrs. Wesley, to use her own expression, "*waded* through the fire." At this time, John, who had not been remembered till that moment, was heard crying in the nursery. The father ran to the stairs, but they were so nearly consumed that they would not bear his weight : and being utterly in despair, he fell upon his knees in the hall, and in agony commended the soul of the child to God. John had been awakened by the light, and finding it impossible to escape by the door climbed upon a chest which stood near the window, and he was then seen from the yard. There was no time for procuring a ladder, but one man was hoisted upon the shoulders of another, and thus he was taken out. A moment after the whole roof fell in. When the child was carried out to the house where his parents were, the father cried out, "Come neighbours, let us kneel down, let us give thanks to God ! he has given me all my eight children : let the house go, I am rich enough." The son remembered this providential deliverance through life, with the deepest gratitude. The memory of his escape, on this occasion, is preserved in one of his early portraits, which has below the head the representation of a house in flames,

with the motto, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning."

The effect of the special care of the mother over the spiritual welfare of her child, whom God had so mercifully preserved, was, that under the divine blessing he became early serious; for at the age of eight years, he was admitted by his father to partake of the sacrament. In 1714, he was placed at the Charter House, where he was noticed for his diligence and progress in learning. "Here, for his quietness, regularity, and application, he became a favorite with the master, Dr. Walker; and through life he retained so great a predilection for the place, that on his annual visit to London, he made it a custom to walk the scene of his boyhood. To most men, every year would render a pilgrimage of this kind more painful than the last; but Wesley seems never to have looked back with melancholy upon the days that were gone; earthly regrets of this kind could find no room in one who was continually pressing onward to the goal."\* When he had attained his 17th year, he was elected to Christ Church Oxford, "where he pursued his studies with great advantage, I believe under the direction of Dr. Wigan, a gentleman eminent for his classical knowledge. Mr. Wesley's natural temper in his youth was gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humour. When he was about twenty-one years of age, 'he appeared,' as Mr. Badcock has observed, 'the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments.'† His perfect knowledge of the classics gave a smooth polish to his wit, and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions."‡

\* Southey's Life. † Westminster Magazine. ‡ Whitehead's Life.

Some time after this, whilst preparing for Deacon's Orders, he turned his attention to the study of divinity, and became deeply serious, from which he never departed. He was ordained Deacon in September, 1725, and the year following was elected Fellow of Lincoln College. His previous seriousness had been the subject of much banter and ridicule, and appears to have been urged against him, in the election, by his opponents; but his reputation for learning and diligence, and the excellence of his character, triumphed; and, what was probably to him the greatest pleasure, he had the gratification of seeing the joy this event gave to his venerable parents, and which was emphatically expressed in their letters.

“He spent the summer after his election to the fellowship with his parents, in Lincolnshire, and took that opportunity of conversing with them at large upon those serious topics which then fully occupied his mind. In September he returned to Oxford, and resumed his usual studies. ‘His literary character was now established in the University; he was acknowledged by all parties to be a man of talents, and an excellent critic in the learned languages. His compositions were distinguished by an elegant simplicity of style, and justness of thought, that strongly marked the excellence of his classical taste. His skill in logic, or the art of reasoning, was universally known and admired. The high opinion that was entertained of him in these respects was soon publicly expressed, by choosing him Greek Lecturer, and Moderator of the classes, on the seventh of November; though he had only been elected Fellow of the College in March, was little more than twenty-three years of age, and had not proceeded Master of



Arts.' He took this degree in February, 1727; became his father's curate in August the same year; returned to Oxford in 1728, to obtain Priest's orders; and paid another visit to Oxford in 1729; where, during his stay, he attended the meetings of a small society formed by his brother Charles, Mr. Morgan, and a few others, to assist each other in their studies, and to consult how to employ their time to the best advantage.

"After about a month, he returned to Epworth; but upon Doctor Morley, the Rector of his college, requiring his residence, he quitted his father's curacy, and in November again settled in Oxford. He now obtained pupils, and became tutor in the College; presided as Moderator in the disputations six times a week; and had the chief direction of a religious society. From this time he stood more prominently forward in his religious character, and in efforts to do good to others; and began more fully to prove that 'they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution.'

"As Mr. Charles Wesley was so immediately connected with his brother in that great revival of religion which has gone by the name of Methodism, and as his labors in the commencement of that work were inferior only to those of his brother, it may be admissable just to turn to his history; and particularly also, as it was to him and his companions at college, during the absence of Mr. John Wesley, that the appellation *Methodists* was given. Charles Wesley was five years younger than his brother John; and was educated at Westminster School, under his eldest brother, Samuel, from whom he is said to have derived a still stronger tincture of High Church principles than was imbibed under the paternal roof.

‘When he had been some years at school, Mr. R. Wesley, a gentleman of large fortune in Ireland, wrote to his father, and asked if he had any son named Charles; if so, he would make him his heir. Accordingly, a gentleman in London brought money for his education several years. But one year another gentleman called, probably Mr. Wesley himself, talked largely with him, and asked him if he was willing to go with him to Ireland. Mr. Charles desired to write to his father, who answered immediately, and referred it to his own choice. He chose to stay in England.’ ‘Mr. John Wesley, in his account of his brother, calls this a fair escape. The fact is more remarkable than he was aware of; for the person who inherited the property intended for Charles Wesley, and who took the name of Wesley, or Wellesley, in consequence, was the first Earl of Mornington, grandfather of Marquis Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington.’

“The lively disposition of Charles, although he pursued his studies diligently, and was unblamable in his conduct, repelled all those exhortations to a more strictly religious course which John seriously urged upon him, after he was elected to Christ Church. During his brother’s absence as his father’s curate, his letters, however, became more grave; and when Mr. John Wesley returned to Oxford, in November, 1729, ‘I found him,’ he observes, ‘in great earnestness to save his soul.’ His own account of himself is, that he lost his first year at College in diversions; that the next, he set himself to study; that diligence led him into serious thinking; that he went to the weekly sacrament, persuading two or three students to accompany him; and that he observed the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the University.

'This,' says he, 'gained me the harmless name of *Methodist*.\*' Thus it appears that Charles was the first modern Methodist, and that he in fact laid the foundations of the religious society which continues to be distinguished by that appellation. To this society Mr. John Wesley joined himself on his return to reside at Oxford; and by his influence and energy gave additional vigour to their exertions to promote their own spiritual improvement, and the good of others. The union of system and efficiency which this association presented, well accorded with his practical and governing mind; and, no doubt, under the leadings of a superior agency, of which he was unconscious, he was thus training himself to those habits of regular and influential exertion and enterprise which subsequently rendered him the instrument of a revival of religion through the land. Of the little society of which, by the mere force of

\* From the name of an ancient sect of Physicians, say some of Mr. Wesley's Biographers; but probably the wits of Oxford, who imposed the name, knew nothing of that sect of the middle ages. The Nonconformists were often called, in derision, Methodists; and the name was probably transmitted from them; or it might be given merely from the rigid adherence to method in study by Mr. Charles Wesley. It is, however, somewhat worthy of notice, that before the times of Nonconformity, properly so called, we find Methodists mentioned as one of the minor sects in conjunction with the Anabaptists; for, as early as 1639, in a sermon preached at Lambeth, they are rated in good set style for their aversion to rhetorical sermons:—"Where are now our Anabaptists, and *plain pack-staff Methodists*, who esteem of all flowers of rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds, and of all elegancies of speech no better than profane spells?" &c. Their fault in those days, it appears, was to prefer plain preaching: no bad compliment, though an undesigned one. The epithet used to describe them, may also intimate that they were *plain* in

his character, he thus became the head, Mr. Hervey, the author of the 'Meditations,' and the celebrated Whitefield, were members."\*

Mr. Wesley, the father, for some years, had been declining; and he was very solicitous that the cure in which he had faithfully laboured should be obtained for his son John, from an anxious desire that the good which he had effected might not be lost through the carelessness of a lukewarm successor; and that his wife and daughters might not be dispossessed of their home. John, however, would not consent to this arrangement: more good, he averred, was to be done to others by his continuance at Oxford: the schools of the prophets were there: was it not a more extensive benefit to sweeten the fountain, than to purify a particular stream? Besides, the parish contained two thousand souls; and he said, "I see not how any man can take care of a hundred." The latter opinion, however, he greatly changed, when his heart became purified and inflamed by divine love. Neither seas nor continents could then bound either his desires or his efforts for the salvation of immortal men. On one occasion, to arguments which were used by some opponents of his zeal, who wished to confine his labours within the limits of a dress and manners. At a later period, 1693, some of the Non-conformists, who had renounced the imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification, except in the merit of it, and whose views were somewhat similar to those of the Wesleyan Methodists on the imputation of faith for righteousness, were called by their brethren, the New Methodists. They were not however a sect, but were so denominated from the New Method which they took in stating the doctrine of justification. Thus we have a Calvinistic pamphlet, under this data, written against "the principles of the *New Methodists* in the great point of justification."

\* Watson's Life.

parish, he replied, "I look upon the whole world as my parish." And his unremitting labours were a practical comment upon the sentiment he uttered. The ardency of love which invariably inspired him in behalf of a sinful world, is beautifully pourtrayed in the following lines of one of his hymns.

"O for a trumpet voice,  
On all the world to call,  
To bid their hearts rejoice  
In him who died for all !  
For all my Lord was crucified :  
For all, for all my Saviour died !"

In 1735 the elder Mr. Wesley died. One of his latest desires was, that he might complete his work on Job. This wish seems to have been nearly, if not wholly accomplished ; and John was charged to present the volume to Queen Caroline. Going to London on this commission, he found that the trustees of the new colony of Georgia were in search of persons who would preach the gospel there to the settlers and the Indians, and that they had fixed their eyes upon him and his associates. At first he peremptorily refused to go upon this mission, but at last determined to refer the case to his mother, thinking she would not consent : in this he was mistaken. On the 14th of October, 1735, John and Charles Wesley, in company with Mr. Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony, embarked for Georgia. On board the same vessel, there were twenty-six Moravians, going to join a party of their brethren, from Herrnhut, who had gone out the preceding year, under the sanction of the British government. On their arrival at the Savannah the brothers separated. Charles went with Benjamin Ingham (one of the Oxford society) to Frederica ; John took up his lodging with

the Germans, at Savannah, who had emigrated from Herrnhut.

His expectations in Georgia were not realised. He was detained in Savannah as chaplain to the colony, contrary to his wishes; it being his intention to go farther up into the country as a Missionary to the Indians. He made several excursions amongst them, but owing to their unsettled state from war, he found it impracticable for the present to prosecute his designs. During his stay in America his labours and privations were extraordinary; he was often in perils both by sea and land; the duties of his office were performed with unremitted zeal and diligence; whilst his conduct was truly exemplary and his character unsullied. But meeting with untoward circumstances, and the unkindness of persons from whom he had right to expect different treatment,—which arose in the end to open hostility and direct persecution, originating in his uncompromising treatment of sin,—he took his departure from the colony, and arrived in London, February 3rd, 1738. Charles, who had been appointed to Frederica as chaplain to that part of the colony, had returned to England to procure more ministerial help, sometime before his brother's arrival. But neither of them went back to America.

Up to this period neither of the brothers was savingly converted to God. The servants of God no doubt they were: but they had not entered into the privilege of the gospel;—they were not the *sons* of God. They had not attained to the faith which justifies, and they appeared very ignorant of the way by which the blessings of pardon and peace were to be enjoyed. In the Journal of Mr. John Wesley are found some interesting remarks which he made

upon the conduct of the German emigrants of the Moravian church, who were on board the ship in which he sailed to America. Their behaviour during a storm had struck him very forcibly; and when contrasting his views with theirs in the prospect of death, he was well persuaded that they had attained an experience in religion to which he was a stranger. Whilst he was in bondage to guilty fear and dread, they were undismayed and filled with joy and peace through believing. On their landing, which was on the 6th of February, 1736, Mr. Oglethorpe proceeded to Savannah, and returned the next day accompanied by Mr. Spangenberg, one of the Moravian pastors, already settled there. "I soon found," says Mr. Wesley, "what spirit he was of; and asked his advice with regard to my own conduct. He said, 'My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are the child of God?' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused and said, I know he is the Saviour of the world. 'True;' replied he; 'but do you know he has saved you?' I answered, I hope he has died to save me. He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, I do. But I fear they were vain words."

These pious people in the end became instrumental in the hands of God of leading him, as also Mr. Charles Wesley, to discover more clearly the sin of unbelief, to humbly sue for mercy at the foot of the cross, and to the exercise of that faith which appropriates the merits of the death of Christ to the soul for pardon and acceptance with God. The attachment which Mr. Wesley entertained for this religious

community from what he had known of them abroad, led him to have interviews with them almost immediately on his arrival in London. He wrote down at this time the views which he entertained of himself, and the unproductiveness of all his hitherto efforts to bring himself into a state of peace and safety. The importance of the statement is such that it is here inserted.

“And now,” says he, “it is upwards of two years since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why (what I least of all suspected,) that I who went to America, to convert others, was never converted myself. ‘I am not mad,’ though I thus speak; but ‘speak the words of truth and soberness;’ if haply some of those who still dream may awake, and see, that as I am, so are they.

“Are they read in philosophy? So was I. In ancient or modern tongues? So was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I too have studied it for many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? The very same I could do. Are they plenteous in alms? Behold, I give all my goods to feed the poor.

“Do they give of their labour as well as their substance? I have laboured more abundantly than they all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country; I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God shall please to bring upon me. But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God?



Does all I ever did, or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace? (which, nevertheless, is meet, right, and our bounden duty,) or that I know nothing of myself, that I am, as touching outward, moral righteousness, blameless? or, to come closer yet, the having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity? Does all this give a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means. If the oracles of God are true, if we are still to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' all these things, though when ennobled by faith in Christ, they are holy, and just, and good, yet without it are 'dung and dross.'

"This then have I learned in the ends of the earth, that I am 'fallen short of the glory of God;' that my whole heart is 'altogether corrupt and abominable,' and consequently, my whole life; (seeing it cannot be, that 'an evil tree' should 'bring forth good fruit;') that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which 'are more in number than the hairs of my head,' that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment; that having the sentence of death in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely 'through the redemption that is in Jesus;' I have no hope, but that if I seek I shall find the Christ,' and 'be found in him not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

"If it be said that I have faith, (for many such

things have I heard from many miserable comforters,) I answer, So have the devils—a *sort* of faith; but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. So the apostles had even at Cana in Galilee, when Jesus first ‘manifested forth his glory;’ even then they, in a sort, ‘believed on him;’ but they had not then ‘the faith that overcometh the world.’ The faith I want is ‘a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favor of God.’ I want that faith which St. Paul recommends to all the world, especially in his Epistle to the Romans,—that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out, ‘I live not; but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.’ I want that faith which none has, without knowing that he hath it: (though many imagine they have it, who have it not;) for whosoever hath it is freed from sin; the whole ‘body of sin is destroyed’ in him; he is freed from fear, ‘having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.’ And he is freed from doubt, ‘having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him; which Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.’ ”

A spirit thus breathing after God, and anxious to be taught “the way of God more perfectly,” could not be left in its darkness and solicitude. As his conversion to God is of deep interest, the few pages which detail the particulars of it, taken from his Life by Mr. Watson, needs no apology for introducing them. “A few days after his arrival in London, he met with Peter Bohler, a minister of the Mora-

vian Church. This was on February 7th, which he marks as 'a day much to be remembered,' because the conversation which he had with Bohler on the subject of saving faith, a subject probably brought on by himself, first opened his mind to true views on that subject, notwithstanding the objections with which he assaulted the statements of the Moravian teacher, and which caused Bohler more than once to exclaim, 'My brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away.' At Oxford, whither he had gone to visit Charles, who was sick, he again met with his Moravian friend, 'by whom,' he says, 'in the hand of the great God, I was clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved with the full Christian salvation.'

"He was now convinced that his faith had been too much separated from an evangelical view of the promises of a free justification, or pardon of sin, through the atonement and mediation of Christ alone, which was the reason why he had been held in continual bondage and fear. In a few days he met Peter Bohler again,—'who now,' he says, 'amazed me more and more, by the accounts he gave of the fruits of living faith, the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' being confident that God would hereby show me whether this doctrine was of God.'

"In a fourth conversation with this excellent man, he was still more confirmed in the view, 'that faith is, to use the words of our church, a sure trust and confidence which a man has in God, that, through the merit of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God.' Some of his ob-

jections to Bohler's statements on instantaneous conversion were also removed by a diligent examination of the scriptures. 'I had,' he observes, 'but one retreat left on this subject: Thus, I grant God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now? But, on Sunday, 22nd, I was beat out of this retreat, too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses, who testified God had so wrought in themselves, giving them in a moment, such a faith in the blood of his Son as translated them out of darkness into light, and from sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief!''

"He now began to declare that doctrine of faith which he had been taught; and those who were convinced of sin gladly received it. He was also much confirmed in the truth by hearing the experience of Mr. Hutchins of Pembroke-College, and Mrs. Fox: 'Two living witnesses,' he says, 'that God can, at least, if he does not always, give that faith whereof cometh salvation, in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven.'

"Mr. Wesley and a few others now formed themselves into a religious society, which met in Fetter-Lane. But although they thus assembled with the Moravians, they remained members of the Church of England; and afterwards, when some of the Moravian teachers introduced new doctrines, Mr. Wesley and his friends separated from them, and formed that distinct community which has since been known as 'The Methodist Society.' The rules of the Fetter-Lane society were printed under the title of 'Orders of a Religious Society, meeting in

Fetter-Lane; in obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Bohler. 1738.'

"As yet Mr. Wesley had not attained the blessing for which he so earnestly sought, and now with clearer views. His language as to himself, though still that of complaint, was become, in truth, the language of a broken and a contrite heart. It was no longer in the tone of a man disappointed as to the results of his own efforts, and thrown into distressing perplexity, as not knowing where to turn for help. He was now bowed in lowly sorrow before the throne; but he knew that it was 'the throne of grace;' and his cry was that of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' In a letter to a friend, he says,—

" 'I feel what you say, though not enough; for I am under the same condemnation. I see that the whole law of God is holy, just, and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that 'I am sold under sin.' I know that I too deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations, and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy: I am unholy. God is a consuming fire: I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed.

" 'Yet I hear a voice, (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'Believe and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth is passed from death into life. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

“ In this state of mind he continued till May the 24th, 1738, and then gives the following account of his conversion :—

“ ‘ I think, it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, ‘ There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.’ 2 Peter i. 4. Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words, ‘ Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.’ In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul’s. The anthem was, ‘ Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord : Lord hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it ? But there is mercy with thee ; therefore thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.’

“ ‘ In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation : and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.’

“ ‘ I began to pray with all my might, for those who had in a more especial manner despitely used me, and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, ‘ this cannot be faith, for where is thy joy ?’ Then was I taught, that peace

and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: but, that as to the transports of joy, that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, 'according to the counsels of his own will.'

"After this he had some struggles with doubt; but he proceeded from 'strength to strength,' till he could say, 'Now I was always conqueror.' His experience, nurtured by habitual prayer, and deepened by unwearied exertion in the cause of his Saviour, settled into that steadfast faith and solid peace, which the grace of God perfected in him to the close of his long and active life.

"His brother Charles was also made partaker of the same grace. They had passed together through the briars and thorns, through the perplexities and shadows of the legal wilderness, and the hour of their deliverance was not far separated. Bohler visited Charles in his sickness at Oxford, but 'the pharisee within' was somewhat offended when the honest German shook his head at learning that his hope of salvation rested upon 'his best endeavours.' After his recovery, the reading of Halyburton's *Life* produced in him a sense of his want of that faith which brings 'peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Bohler visited him again in London, and he began seriously to consider the doctrine which he urged upon him. His convictions of his state of danger, as a man unjustified before God, and of his need of the faith whereof cometh salvation, increased, and he spent his whole time in discoursing on these subjects, in prayer, and reading the scriptures. Luther on the Galatians then fell into his hands, and on reading the preface he observes:—

“‘I marvelled that we were so soon and entirely removed from him that called us into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel. Who would believe that our church had been founded on this important article of justification by faith alone? I am astonished I should ever think this a new doctrine; especially while our Articles and Homilies stand unrepealed, and the key of knowledge is not yet taken away. From this time I endeavoured to ground as many of our friends as came to see me in this fundamental truth,—salvation by faith alone,—not an idle, dead faith, but a faith which works by love, and is incessantly productive of all good works and all holiness.’

“On Whit-Sunday, May 21st, he awoke in hope and expectation of soon attaining the object of his wishes, the knowledge of God reconciled in Christ Jesus. At nine o'clock his brother and some friends came to him and sung a hymn suited to the day. When they left him he betook himself to prayer. Soon afterwards a person came and said, in a very solemn manner, ‘Believe in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities.’ The words went through his heart, and animated him with confidence. He looked into the scripture, and read, ‘Now Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is even in thee.’ He then cast his eye on these words, ‘He hath put a new song into my mouth, even thanksgiving unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.’ Afterwards he opened upon Isaiah xl. 1: ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith our God; speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand



double for all her sins.' In reading these passages of scripture, he was enabled to view Christ as set forth to be a propitiation for his sins, through faith in his blood; and he received that peace and rest in God which he had so earnestly sought.

"The next day he greatly rejoiced in reading the 107th Psalm, so nobly descriptive, he observes, of what God had done for his soul. He had a very humbling view of his own weakness; but was enabled to contemplate Christ in his power to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him.

"Such was the manner in which these excellent men, whom God had been long preparing for the great work of reviving scriptural Christianity throughout these lands, were at length themselves brought 'into the liberty of the sons of God.'

"Before Mr. Wesley entered upon the career which afterwards distinguished him, and having no preconceived plan or course of conduct, but to seek good for himself, and to do good to others, he visited the Moravian settlements in Germany. On his journey he formed an acquaintance with several pious ministers in Holland and Germany; and at Marienbourn was greatly edified by the conversation of Count Zinzendorf, and others of the brethren, of whose views he did not however in all respects even then approve. From thence he proceeded to Hernhuth, where he staid a fortnight, conversing with the elders, and observing the economy of that Church, part of which with modifications he afterwards introduced among his own societies. The sermons of Christian David especially interested him; and of one of them, on 'the ground of our faith,' he gives the substance in his Journal.

"Mr. Wesley arrived in London in September,

1738. His connexion with the Moravians who met in Fetter-Lane, was not of long continuance, owing to the introduction of several novel opinions amongst them. Towards the Moravian Church at large, Mr. Wesley continued to feel an unabated affection; but as he was never a member of that church, and maintained only a kind of co-fraternity with those of them who were in London, when they became infected with strange notions. His departure from them, with such as were of the same mind with himself, and were also members of the Church of England, was a step of prudence and of peace. Antinomian errors and mystic notions of ceasing from ordinances and waiting for faith in *stillness*, were amongst the sentiments which had crept into the society and were advocated by some of their preachers, from which Mr. Wesley dissented. That incautious book, Luther on the Galatians, appears to have been the source of the Antinomianism of the Moravians; and their quietism they learned from Madame Guion, and other French mystic writers.\*

On Mr. Wesley and his party retiring from the Moravian brethren, he took a place near Moorfields, which had been used as a foundry for casting cannon, during the civil wars. This was in the year 1740.

The circumstance of Mr. Wesley's conversion formed an important crisis in his life, and laid the foundation of his future usefulness; and from which originated also a character adorned with all the graces of the Spirit, in which he transcendently excelled to the praise and glory of God who had wrought the change in him. Having properly commenced the christian race,

“He ran his course with even joy,  
And closely walk'd with God to heav'n.”

\* Watson's Life.

As he had obtained correct views of the method by which God justifies a sinner, and had happily been brought to realise the grace himself, his ministry after this presented an aspect both new and attractive; and the word which he delivered was as fire among dry stubble. In all the churches in London, to the pulpits of which he had access, he announced salvation as the gift of God, independent of any merit in man,—to be received by an act of simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,—and to be attained *now*, as a present blessing, by all who felt their sin and apprehended the consequences. As the nature of this great and important doctrine,—justification by faith without the deeds of the law, and also the equally important doctrine of the direct witness of the Holy Spirit to the spirit of a believer that his sins are all forgiven him,—were little understood and insisted upon by the clergy, he was looked upon in a similar light with St. Paul when at Athens, as preaching a new doctrine and bringing strange things to their ears; this circumstance, together with being announced as a recently returned missionary from the American Indians, gave to his character in those days an air of novelty, and he became exceedingly popular, insomuch that the churches were crowded to excess. This latter consequence of his popularity, connected with the plain and pointed manner of his preaching, gave huge offence to many of the more respectable part of the regular congregations; not feeling disposed either to be crowded in their pews or disturbed in their sins. This state of things did not continue long; notice was given him, first from one church and then from another, that he must preach there no more, until scarcely a church was left in which the privilege to announce the word of reconciliation was allowed him.

At this juncture, in the spring of 1739, Mr. Whitfield who had returned from America, was attracting great congregations in and about Bristol, to whom he preached with great success in the open air; and he being wishful to induce his spiritual counsellor and friend to engage in the same mode of warfare against the kingdom of sin and Satan, invited Mr. Wesley to come over and help him. He felt a reluctance at first to comply with the solicitation: but the next day he overcame his scruples, and preached abroad, on an eminence near the city, to more than two thousand persons. On this practice he observes, that though till lately he had been so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that he should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church, yet "I have since seen abundant reason to adore the wise providence of God herein, making a way for myriads of people, who never troubled any church or were likely so to do, to hear that word which they soon found to be the power of God unto salvation." He became after this a zealous advocate of out-door preaching, and laboured in it perhaps more than any other man. The leadings of providence were carefully marked by him, and he as conscientiously followed in the track.

The conduct of Mr. Wesley has been strangely impugned for the opposition he manifested to the interests of the Church, by the introduction of various innovations. The fact is, Mr. Wesley was a true Churchman; and he neither desired nor designed innovations upon the Establishment. Those circumstances into which he was led, and which have been construed into innovations, originated in hostility to him whilst in the discharge of his duty, from church

people themselves. He commenced his ministry, after he had found peace with God and was established in the faith, with full purpose of mind and the purest intention to revive religion in the Church of England, and to spread scriptural Christianity through the land; and to the latest period of his life he does not appear to have departed from this object. He believed he was called of God to preach the gospel; and that the great design of the office he sustained was *to save souls*. Every thing therefore of minor importance in his estimation must yield to this; and that whilst he was a clergyman of the Establishment, to which he was conscientiously attached, he conceived it right that the forms and usages of the church should be made to bend to the *design* of the ministry, and not the design to them. Church or no church, was a maxim with him, so that souls might be saved. He conceived that his account at the last day, as the steward of God, was more likely to be given up with fairer prospects of joy, in attempting the salvation of souls in what by hirelings is deemed an *irregular* way, than if he suffered them in a *regular* way to perish. To save immortal men from wrath and hell, with him was a subject of paramount importance; and to effect which, every means and any means, authorised by heaven, were resorted to by him. And the end at which he aimed was realised to an unparalleled extent.

Although his attempts to introduce a revival of religion into the Church, were not effected in the way he anticipated, by a cordial co-operation of his brethren the clergy; yet the Great Head of the universal church saw fit to lead him into the highways and hedges, and the streets and lanes of the city, and there to prepare a people for himself; and from amongst

whom, to raise up faithful and zealous coadjutors, by whose united instrumentality, scriptural Christianity and a glorious revival of religion have been spread more or less throughout the land.

Mr. Wesley recoiled at first in uniting with laymen as fellow-labourers in the great work to which he was called, as he had similarly stood opposed to preaching out of doors ; but as he was open to conviction, and recognizing as he did the credentials of a Divine call in the persons thus forced upon his notice, he dared not to oppose the order of God, but took them by the hand, admitted them into his friendship and councils, and encouraged them to exercise their talents in conjunction with himself, in preaching the everlasting gospel to the perishing sons of Britain, who were in general as sheep without a shepherd ; and mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed. Societies were formed and multiplied in various directions ; and a numerous people, "combined to seek the things above," were thus raised up without the walls of the Church ; and that by the chief instrumentality of a clergyman, who conscientiously followed a train of providences in the adoption of all his plans. And the Connexion now stands, a mighty body, yet increasing, in the presence of the Church, a separate and distinct community,—not in hostile array, but entertaining for "the venerable Establishment" of their country, a friendly regard ; praying for its peace, and that best prosperity may attend it.

The position which the Methodists assume as a religious body, in the view of other denominations, is variously estimated ; but scarcely by any party is it cordially approved. The Methodist connexion seems to stand alone, surrounded by other commu-

nities, in the maintenance of a *catholic spirit*, and of principles which are decidedly *anti-sectarian*. This is evidently a characteristic feature of Wesleyan Methodism; and the people have nothing to fear, but that God will be with them and prosper their enterprises, whilst they perseveringly abide by the spirit and principles which have hitherto distinguished the connexion at large.

In the year 1743, Mr. Wesley drew up a set of Rules for the Societies which he and his brother Charles had formed, at the Chapel in Moorfields, in Bristol, Kingswood, and other parts. These Rules continue in force to the present time, and the observance of which was then, and continues to be, the condition of membership. They are inserted at page 14 of this work. They enjoin no peculiar opinions, and relate entirely to moral conduct, to charitable offices, and to the observance of the ordinances of God. Churchmen or Dissenters, walking by these Rules, might become and remain members of these societies, provided they held their doctrinal views and disciplinary prepossessions in peace and charity. The sole object of the union was to assist the members to "make their calling and election sure," by cultivating the religion of the heart, and a holy conformity to the laws of Christ.

"Mr. Wesley's mother about this time began to attend his ministry. She had been somewhat prejudiced against her sons by reports of their 'errors' and 'extravagancies;' but was convinced, upon hearing them, that they spoke 'according to the oracles of God.' There is an interesting entry in Mr. Wesley's Journal respecting this venerable woman:—

"'September 3. I talked largely with my mother, who told me, that, till a short time since, she had

scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: Much less did she imagine, that this was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee*; the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins.'

"'I asked, whether her Father (Dr. Annesly) had not the same faith; and, whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered, 'He had it himself, and declared a little before his death, that, for more than forty years, he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being *accepted in the Beloved*.' But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, explicitly upon it: whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few, not as promised to all the people of God.'

"Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield had hitherto laboured together in harmony, and were united in a common design to promote the revival of scriptural Christianity through the land. But Mr. Wesley about this time, being impressed with the strong tendency of the Calvinistic doctrines to produce Antinomianism, published a Sermon against absolute Predestination, at which Mr. Whitefield, who sometime previously had embraced that notion, took offence. A controversy between them, embracing some other points, ensued, which issued in a temporary estrangement; and they laboured from this time independently of each other; their societies in



London, Kingswood, and other places, being kept quite separate.

“A reconciliation however took place between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield in January 1750, so that they preached in each other’s chapels. The following entry on this subject appears in his Journal:— ‘Friday 19th. In the evening I read prayers at the chapel in West-street, and Mr. Whitefield preached a plain, affectionate discourse. Sunday 21. He read prayers, and I preached. Sunday 28. I read prayers, and Mr. Whitefield preached. How wise is God, in giving different talents to different preachers! So, by the blessing of God, one more stumbling block is removed.’

“The following extract from Mr. Whitefield’s Will is a pleasing instance of generous, truly Christian feeling:—‘I leave a mourning ring to my honoured and dear friends, and disinterested fellow-labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine.’

“Mr. Wesley, at Mr. Whitefield’s own desire, preached his funeral sermon at the Tabernacle, Moorfields.”\*

The first lay assistants Mr. Wesley had, were Thomas Maxfield and John Nelson. In reference to the former, Mr. Watson introduces the circumstance as follows:—“Several Preachers were now employed by Mr. Wesley, to assist in the growing work, which already had swelled beyond even his and his brother’s active powers suitably to supply with the ministration of the word of God. Mr. Charles Wesley had discouraged this from the be-

\* Watson’s Life.

ginning, and even he himself hesitated; but, with John, the promotion of religion was the first concern, and church order the second, although inferior in consideration to that only. With Charles these views were often reversed. Mr. Wesley, in the year 1741, had to caution his brother against joining the Moravians, after the example of Mr. Gambold, to which he was at that time inclined; and adds, 'I am not clear, that brother Maxfield should not expound at Grey-hound Lane; nor can I as yet do without him. Our Clergymen have increased full as much as the Preachers.' Mr. Maxfield's preaching had the strong sanction of the Countess of Huntingdon; but so little of design, with reference to the forming of a sect, had Mr. Wesley, in the employment of Mr. Maxfield, that, in his own absence from London, he had only authorised him to pray with the society, and to advise them as might be needful; and upon his beginning to preach, he hastened back to silence him. On this his mother addressed him, 'John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily any thing of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach, as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.' He took this advice, and could not venture to forbid him."

The labours of Mr. Wesley were incessant, and nothing seemed capable to abate the fervour of his zeal. The journeys which he was perpetually taking throughout the kingdom, were not interrupted by any kind of weather. His work was prosecuted as cheerfully amidst the keen blasts of winter, as during the milder seasons of the year. In the early

part of the year 1747, we find him braving the snows of February in Lincolnshire, on his way to New-castle.

Of this journey he writes :—" *Tues. 10.* My brother returned from the north, and I prepared to supply his place there. *Sunday, 15.* I was very weak and faint ; but on *Monday, 16,* I rose soon after three, lively and strong, and all my complaints were fled like a dream.

"I was wondering, the day before, at the mildness of the weather ; such as seldom attends me in my journeys. But my wonder now ceased : The wind was turned full north, and blew so exceeding hard and keen, that when we came to Hatfield, neither my companions nor I had much use of our hands or feet. After resting an hour, we bore up again, through the wind and snow, which drove full in our faces. But this was only a squall. In Baldock-field the storm began in earnest. The large hail drove so vehemently in our faces, that we could not see, nor hardly breathe. However, before two o'clock we reached Baldock, where one met and conducted us safe to Potten.

"About six I preached to a serious congregation. *Tuesday, 17.* We set out as soon as it was well light ; but it was really hard work to get forward ; for the frost would not well bear or break : and the untracked snow, covering all the roads, we had much ado to keep our horses on their feet. Meantime the wind rose higher and higher, till it was ready to overturn both man and beast. However, after a short bait at Bugden, we pushed on, and were met in the middle of an open field with so violent a storm of rain and hail, as we had not had before. It drove through our coats, great and small, boots and every thing, and

yet froze as it fell, even upon our eyebrows ; so that we had scarce either strength or motion left, when we came into our inn at Stilton.

“ We now gave up our hopes of reaching Grantham, the snow falling faster and faster. However, we took the advantage of a fair blast to set out, and made the best of our way to Stamford-Heath. But here a new difficulty arose, from the snow lying in large drifts. Sometimes horse and man were well nigh swallowed up. Yet in less than an hour we were brought safe to Stamford. Being willing to get as far as we could, we made but a short stop here ; and about sunset came, cold and weary, yet well, to a little town called Brig-Casterton.

“ *Wed.* 18.—Our servant came up and said, ‘ Sir, there is no travelling to-day. Such a quantity of snow has fallen in the night, that the roads are quite filled up.’ I told him, ‘ At least we can walk twenty miles a day, with our horses in our hands.’ So in the name of God we set out. The north-east wind was piercing as a sword, and had driven the snow into such uneven heaps, that the main road was unpassable. However, we kept on, a-foot or on horseback, till we came to the White Lion at Grantham.

“ Some from Grimsby had appointed to meet us here ; but not hearing any thing of them, (for they were at another house, by mistake,) after an hour’s rest, we set out straight for Epworth. On the road we overtook a Clergyman and his servant ; but the tooth-ache quite shut my mouth. We reached Newark about five.”

This extract is given as a sample of his intrepidity in the difficulties he met with, which were not few, even in the ordinary prosecution of his duties ; and

is selected from others on account of its connexion with this part of Lincolnshire.

Through the whole protracted life of Mr. Wesley, he maintained an undeviating regard to motive, and upheld a character in uniform holy consistency. He was a man of one business. His love to God was supreme; and he was always intent both upon doing and suffering his will. The word of God was a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. Neither the opposition of enemies, nor the entreaties of friends, could ever induce him to compromise his principles, or relax his efforts in the work to which he believed God had called him. Even his own wife, whom he tenderly regarded, was not capable of turning him from his purpose. There appears to have been an understanding betwixt them, previously to their marriage, that the union was not to interfere with his ministerial engagements, and that he was neither to preach a sermon nor travel a mile less on that account. They had not been married long, however, which was in the year 1751, before she began to grow weary with his unsettled manner of life, and strove to prevail upon him to restrict his labours, and conform to more retired habits. But as she found he was not to be persuaded by argument, she had recourse to harsher means. Being of a high spirit, and not willing to concede her wishes to the judgment of her husband, she gave way to evil thoughts of incontinency, which generated a confirmed passion of jealousy. Her conduct became more violent and dangerous. She attempted the utmost injury of his character, manuscripts, friendships, and consequently his usefulness, not excepting his person. Having carried on this hostility for a few years without

effecting her ascendancy, which he bore with all possible meekness and fortitude, of her own accord she retired from his society. The conduct of Mr. Wesley during this unpleasant and painful position in which he was placed with his wife, reflects no ordinary degree of credit on his Christian constancy and faithfulness as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the whole of this affair, there is but little doubt that Satan was the principal abetter, with subtle intent to turn him aside, or to neutralise his efforts in the bold and successful attacks which he was making upon his kingdom. And it might be permitted of the Lord not only for the trial of his faith, but that his servant might exemplify, in such a situation, "his constant and God-like mind." This example is a monition, that when a man is called of God to the performance of a special work, the turbulent passions of an angry woman are not to intimidate him in the performance of his duty; neither is the affection due to a wife to be permitted to sway the mind, by her mild solicitations, from fully and faithfully following the Lord, whose service is of paramount importance, and who allows no one to compete with him in that supreme love which he claims from all his subjects, and which is to be shewn by all fidelity. And even this, or more than this, is implied in our Lord's declaration to his disciples, in answer to Peter's assertion, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."\*

\* Mark x. 29. Luke xviii. 29. Matt. xix. 29.—x. 37—39.

The labours of Mr. Wesley are too multitudinous even to sketch in this work;—labours in which he was unabatedly employed as an Itinerant Preacher for more than fifty years. To become acquainted with which the reader is again directed to his Journals, which “present a picture of unwearied exertion, such as was perhaps never before exhibited, and in themselves they form ample volumes, of great interest, not only as a record of his astonishing and successful labours, but from their miscellaneous and almost uniformly instructive character. Now he is seen braving the storms and tempests in his journeys, fearless of the snows of winter, and the heats of summer; then, with a deep susceptibility of all that is beautiful and grand in nature, recording the pleasures produced by a smiling landscape, or by mountain scenery:—Here turning aside to view some curious object of nature; there some splendid mansion of the great; showing at the same time in his pious and often elegant, though brief reflections, with what skill he made all things contribute to devotion and cheerfulness. Again, we trace him into his proper work, preaching in crowded chapels, or to multitudes collected in the most public resorts in towns, or in the most picturesque places of their vicinity. Now he is seen by the side of the sick and dying, and then, surrounded with his societies, uttering his pastoral advices. An interesting and instructive letter frequently occurs; then a jet of playful and good humoured wit upon his persecutors, or the stupidity of his casual hearers; occasionally, in spite of the philosophers, an apparition story is given as he heard it, and of which his readers are left to judge; and often we meet with a grateful record of providential escapes, from the falls of his

horses, or from the violence of mobs. Notices of books also appear, which are often exceedingly just and striking; always short and characteristic; and as he read much on his journeys, they are very frequent."

There are occasional notices in his Journal of the state of his health as he farther advanced in years. In 1783 he paid a visit to Holland, in company with Messrs. Brackenbury, Broadbent, and Whitfield. Whilst at Utrecht he made the following entry:—

"*Sat. JUNE 28.* I have this day lived fourscore years; and by the mercy of God, my eyes are not waxed dim, and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, is just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless. Rather may I

‘My body with my charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live.’”

On his attaining his eighty-fifth year, he makes the following reflections:—

"I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year. And what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so for bodily blessings also! How little have I suffered yet, by ‘the rush of numerous years!’ It is true, I am not so agile as I was in times past: I do not run or walk so fast as I did. My sight is a little decayed. My left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read. I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple, (occasioned by a blow received some time since,) and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism. I find likewise some decay in my memory, with regard to names and things lately past: but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard,



twenty, forty, or sixty years ago. Neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, (though I want but a third part of the food I once did,) nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in travelling or preaching. And I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and I believe as correctly, as ever.

“To what cause can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein: and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children.—May we not impute it, as inferior means: 1. To my constant exercise and change of air? 2. To my never having lost a night’s sleep, sick or well, at land or sea, since I was born? 3. To my having sleep at command, so that whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes, day or night? 4. To my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning? 5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years? 6. To my having had so little pain in my life, and so little sorrow or anxious care?—Even now, though I find pain daily in my eye, temple, or arm, yet it is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time.

“Whether or not this is sent to give me warning that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle, I do not know: but, be it one way or the other, I have only to say,—

‘ My remnant of days  
 I spend to His praise,  
 Who died the whole world to redeem :  
 Be they many or few,  
 My days are his due,  
 And they all are devoted to Him ! ’ ”

And, referring to some persons in the nation who thought themselves endowed with the gift of prophecy, he adds, "If this is to be the last year of my life, according to some of these prophets, I hope it will be the best. I am not careful about it, but heartily receive the advice of the angel in Milton,—

‘How well is thine; how long permit to heaven.’”

The brothers, whose affection no differences of opinion, and no conflicts of party, could diminish, were now to be separated by death. Of the last days of Mr. Charles Wesley, Dr. Whitehead gives the following account:—

“Mr. Charles Wesley had a weak body, and a poor state of health, during the greatest part of his life. I believe he laid the foundation of both at Oxford by too close application to study, and abstinence from food. He rode much on horseback, which probably contributed to lengthen out life to a good old age. I visited him several times in his last sickness; and his body was indeed reduced to the most extreme state of weakness. He possessed that state of mind which he had been always pleased to see in others,—unaffected humility, and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transports of joy, but solid hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace. A few days before his death he composed the following lines. Having been silent and quiet for some time, he called Mrs. Wesley to him, and bid her write as he dictated:—

‘In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
Jesus, my only hope thou art,  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;  
O could I catch a smile from thee,  
And drop into eternity!’

“He died, March 29th, 1788, aged seventy-nine years and three months; and was buried, April 5th, in Marybone church-yard at his own desire. The pall was supported by eight Clergymen of the Church of England. On his tomb-stone are the following lines, written by himself on the death of one of his friends: they could not be more aptly applied to any person than Mr. Charles Wesley:—

‘ With poverty of spirit bless’d,  
Rest, happy saint, in Jesus rest;  
A sinner sav’d, through grace forgiven,  
Redeem’d from earth to reign in heaven!  
Thy labours of unwearied love,  
By thee forgot, are crown’d above;  
Crown’d, through the mercy of thy Lord,  
With a free, full, immense reward!’

“Mr. Charles Wesley was of a warm and lively disposition, of great frankness and integrity, and generous and steady in his friendships. In conversation he was pleasing, instructive, and cheerful; and his observations were often seasoned with wit and humour. His religion was genuine and unaffected. As a Minister, he was familiarly acquainted with every part of divinity; and his mind was furnished with an uncommon knowledge of the Scriptures. His discourses from the pulpit were not dry and systematic, but flowed from the present views and feelings of his own mind. He had a remarkable talent of expressing the most important truths with simplicity and energy; and his discourses were sometimes truly apostolic, forcing conviction on the hearers in spite of the most determined opposition. As a husband, a father, and a friend, his character was amiable. Mrs. Wesley brought him five children, of whom

two sons and a daughter are still living.\* The sons discovered so fine a taste for music, at an early period of life, that they excited general astonishment; and they are now justly admired by the best judges for

\* Miss Wesley, a lady of eminent talents, and great excellence, died Sept. 19, 1828.—And the elder of the sons died in 1834. He was organist to his Majesty, and likewise at the church of St. Mary-le-bone.

“It would be improper,” says Mr. Watson, “to withhold, as I have them before me, in the unpublished letters with which I have been favoured, some incidental remarks of the late Miss Wesley, on the character of her father:—

‘Mr. Moore seems to think that my father preferred *rest to going about to do good*. He had a rising family, and considered it his duty to confine his labours to Bristol and London, where he laboured most sedulously in ministerial offices: and judged that it was incumbent upon him to watch over the youth of his sons, especially in a profession which nature so strongly pointed out, but which was peculiarly dangerous. He always said his brother was formed to lead, and he to follow. No one ever more rejoiced in another’s superiority, or was more willing to confess it. Mr. Moore’s statement of his absence of mind in his younger days, was probably correct, as he was born impetuous, and ardent, and sincere. But what a change must have taken place when we were born! For his exactness in his accounts, in his manuscripts, in his bureau, &c., equalled my uncle’s. Not in his dress, indeed; for my mother said, if she did not watch over him, he might have put on an old for a new coat, and marched out. Such was his power of abstraction, that he could read and compose, with his children in the room, and visitors talking around him. He was near forty when he married, and had eight children, of whom we were the youngest. So kind and amiable a character in domestic life can scarcely be imagined. The tenderness he showed in every weakness, and the sympathy in every pain, would fill sheets to describe. But, I am not writing his eulogy; only I must add, with so warm a temper, he never was heard to speak an angry word to a servant, or known to strike a child in anger,—and he knew no guile!’”

their talents in that pleasing art. The Methodists are greatly indebted to Charles Wesley for his unwearied labours and great usefulness at the first formation of the societies, when every step was attended with difficulty and danger. And being dead he yet speaketh by his numerous and excellent hymns, written for the use of the societies, which still continue to be the means of daily edification and comfort to thousands.\*

The last end of the truly venerable John Wesley was now also approaching. He was on his regular pastoral visit to Ireland, when he entered his eighty-seventh year, on which he remarks in his Journal, "This day I enter on my eighty seventh year. I now find I grow old. 1. My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. 2. My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. 3. My memory of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; but thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God!"

The societies in Cheshire, Lancashire, and the North of England, once more, and for the last time, saw the man, to whom, under God, they owed their religious existence. On his return southward, he passed through the East Riding of Yorkshire, to Hull; preaching in every place as on the brink of

\* A beautiful and able critique upon the poetry and hymns of Mr. C. Wesley appears from the pen of Mr. Watson in his *Life of Mr. Wesley*, pp. 321—330.

eternity. He also visited Epworth, and various parts of Lincolnshire; and, upon attaining his eighty-eighth year, has the following reflections:—

“This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years, I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated; but last August, I found almost a sudden change: my eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me; my strength likewise now quite forsook me; and probably will not return in this world: but I feel no pain from head to foot; only, it seems, nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till

‘The weary springs of life stand still at last.’”

He preached to a small company at Leatherhead, on Wednesday the 23rd of February, from “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.” This proved to be his last sermon. He had been indisposed a few days previously, but continued his labours. On his return home on Friday he became extremely ill. The few days that intervened of his mortality, were days in which he displayed all the distinguishing marks of a dying saint; and veteran soldier of Jesus Christ,—triumphing over his last enemy, and rejoicing in prospect of the glory which awaited him. As a ripe shock of corn, he was fully prepared for the heavenly garner. Feeble and worn out as he was by the ordinary decay of nature, he was sufficiently recollected to express himself on the important subjects he was about to realise, and which had so long engaged his attention, in a way that was highly satisfactory and deeply affecting to the friends who were privileged to visit the chamber where this good man met his

fate. Every expression he uttered bespoke the soundness of his religious experience, and that all his dependance for safety and happiness was placed on the atoning merits of the Redeemer's sacrifice; and that he derived neither hope nor support elsewhere.

On Sunday, while sitting in his chair, he looked quite cheerful, and repeated the latter part of the verse in his brother Charles's Scripture Hymns, on "Forsake me not when my strength faileth," viz.,—

‘Till glad I lay this body down,  
Thy servant Lord attend;  
And, O! my life of mercy crown  
With a triumphant end!’

Soon after, in a most emphatical manner, he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Some time after, whilst one of the company prayed, his whole soul seemed engaged with God for an answer, and his hearty *Amen* showed that he perfectly understood what was said. About half an hour after, he said, "There is no need of more; when at Bristol my words were,

‘I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.’”\*

One said, "Is this the present language of your heart, and do you now feel as you did then?" He

\* "At the Bristol Conference, in 1783, Mr. Wesley was taken very ill; neither he nor his friends thought he could recover. From the nature of his complaint, he supposed a spasm would seize his stomach, and, probably, occasion sudden death. Under these views of his situation, he said to Mr. Bradford, 'I have been reflecting on my past life: I have been wandering up and down, between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow-creatures: and now it is probable, that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered, that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this,

‘I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.’

The sentiment here expressed, and his reference to it in his last sickness, plainly show how steadily he had persevered in the same views of the Gospel."

replied, "Yes," and again, "He is all! He is all!" In the evening he got up again, and whilst sitting in his chair, he said, "How necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation!"

'I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.'

Monday, 28th, his weakness increased. He slept most of the day, and spoke but little; yet that little testified how much his whole heart was taken up in the care of the societies, the glory of God, and the promotion of the things pertaining to that kingdom to which he was hastening. Once he said, in a low but distinct manner, "There is no way into the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus." He afterwards enquired what the words were from which he had preached a little before, at Hampstead. Being told they were these, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c., he replied, "That is the foundation, the only foundation: there is no other." Having spent a restless night, on Tuesday morning he sang two verses of a hymn: then lying still, as if to recover strength, he called for pen and ink; but when they were brought he could not write. A person said, "Let me write for you, Sir: tell me what you would say." He replied, "Nothing, but that God is with us." In the forenoon he said, "I will get up." While they were preparing his clothes, he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished all present, in singing,

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures!"



“ Having got him into his chair, they observed him change for death. But he, regardless of his dying body, said, with a weak voice, ‘ Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those who cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest tongues.’ He then sung,

‘ To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Who sweetly all agree,—’

Here his voice failed. After gasping for breath, he said, ‘ Now we have done all.’ He was then laid in the bed, from which he rose no more. After resting a little he called to those who were with him to ‘ pray and praise.’ They kneeled down, and the room seemed to be filled with the divine presence. A little after, he said, ‘ Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen, and let my corpse be carried into the chapel.’ Then, as if he had done with all below, he again begged they would pray and praise. Several friends that were in the house being called up, they all kneeled down again to prayer, at which time his fervour of spirit was manifest to every one present. But in particular parts of the prayer, his whole soul seemed to be engaged in a manner which evidently showed how ardently he longed for the full accomplishment of their united desires. And when one of the Preachers was praying in a very expressive manner, that if God were about to take away their father to his eternal rest, He would be pleased to continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which He had long made his servant the means of propagating and establishing in the world; such a degree of fervour accompanied his loud *Amen*, as was every way expressive of his soul’s being engaged in the answer of the peti-

tions. On rising from their knees, he took hold of all their hands, and, with the utmost placidness, saluted them, and said, 'Farewell, farewell.'

"A little after, a person coming in, he strove to speak, but could not. Finding they could not understand him, he paused a little, and then, with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, *The best of all is, God is with us*; and, soon after lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, *The best of all is, God is with us*. Being told that his brother's widow was come, he said, 'He giveth his servants rest.' He thanked her, as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. On his lips being wetted, he said, 'We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies: bless the Church and King; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever!' At another time he said, 'He causeth his servants to lie down in peace.' Then pausing a little, he cried, 'The clouds drop fatness!' and soon after, 'The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!' He then called those present to prayer: and though he was greatly exhausted, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. These exertions were, however, too much for his feeble frame; and most of the night following, though he often attempted to repeat the Psalm before-mentioned, he could only utter,

'I'll praise—I'll praise!'"

"On Wednesday morning, the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend, prayed with him, and the last words he was heard to articulate were, 'Farewell!' A few minutes before ten, while

several of his friends were kneeling around his bed, without a lingering groan, this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord."

He was interred on the 9th of March, in a vault behind the City-Road Chapel, in nearly the centre of the burying-ground.

The following is the inscription on the marble tablet, erected to his memory, in the chapel, City-Road:—

**Sacred to the Memory**

OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD;

A Man in Learning and sincere Piety

Scarcely inferior to any;

In Zeal, Ministerial Labours, and extensive Usefulness,

Superior, perhaps, to all men,

Since the Days of ST. PAUL.

Regardless of Fatigue, personal Danger, and Disgrace,

He went out into the highways and hedges

Calling Sinners to Repentance,

And Publishing the GOSPEL of Peace.

He was the Founder of the Methodist Societies,

And the chief promoter and Patron

Of the Plan of Itinerant preaching,

Which he extended through GREAT-BRITAIN and IRELAND,

The WEST-INDIES and AMERICA,

With unexampled Success.

He was born the 17th of June, 1703;

And died the 2nd of March, 1791,

In sure and certain hope of Eternal Life,

Through the Atonement and Mediation of a Crucified  
Saviour.

He was sixty-five Years in the Ministry,

And fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher:

He lived to see, in these KINGDOMS only,

About three hundred Itinerant,  
 And one thousand Local Preachers,  
 Raised up from the midst of his own People ;  
 And eighty thousand Persons in the Societies under his care.  
 His name will be ever had in grateful Remembrance  
 By all who rejoice in the universal Spread  
 Of the Gospel of CHRIST.

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

The following sketches of Mr. Wesley's character are selected from amongst several which were drawn up by different persons and printed soon after his death. The first is by Mr. Alexander Knox, who says :—

“ Very lately, I had an opportunity, for some days together, of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavoured to consider him, not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philosopher; and I must declare, every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed ‘ the gay remembrance of a life well spent :’ and wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at a loss whether to admire most, his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw, in his uninterrupted cheerfulness,

the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth imbittered his discourse; no applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him, even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'May my latter end be like his!'

"But I find myself unequal to the task of delineating such a character. What I have said, may to some appear as panegyric; but there are numbers, and those of taste and discernment too, who can bear witness to the truth, though by no means to the perfectness, of the sketch I have attempted. With such I have been frequently in his company; and every one of them, I am persuaded, would subscribe to all I have said. For my own part, I never was so happy as while with him, and scarcely ever felt more poignant regret than at parting from him; for well I knew, 'I ne'er should look upon his like again.'"

A writer of Mr. Wesley's Life, whom Dr. Whitehead quotes, observed, "Perhaps the most charitable man in England, was Mr. Wesley. His liberality to the poor, knew no bounds but an empty pocket. He gave away, not merely a certain part of his income, but all that he had: his own wants provided for, he devoted all the rest to the necessities of others. He entered upon this good work at a very early period. We are told, that, 'when he had thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two and thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty

pounds. Still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two.' In this ratio he proceeded during the rest of his life: and, in the course of fifty years, it has been supposed, he gave away between twenty and thirty thousand pounds;\* a great part of which, most other men would have put out at interest, upon good security.

"In the distribution of his money, Mr. Wesley was as disinterested as he was charitable. He had no regard to family connexions, nor even to the wants of the Preachers who laboured with him, in preference to strangers. He knew that these had some friends; and he thought that the poor destitute stranger might have none, and therefore had the first claim on his liberality. When a trifling legacy has been paid him, he has been known to dispose of it in some charitable way before he slept, that it might not remain his own property for one night. He often declared that his own hands should be his executors; and though he gained all he could by his publications, and saved all he could, not wasting so much as a sheet of paper; yet, by giving all he could, he was preserved from *laying up treasures upon earth*. He had said in print, that, if he died worth more than ten pounds, independent of his books, and the arrears of his fellowship, which he then held, he would give the world leave to call him, 'a thief and a robber.' This declaration, made in the integrity of his heart, and the height of his zeal, laid him under some inconveniences afterwards, from circumstances which he could not at that time foresee. Yet in this, as all his friends expected, he

\* Money chiefly arising from the constant and large sale of his writings; and the works he abridged.

literally kept his word, as far as human foresight could reach. His chaise and horses, his clothes, and a few trifles of that kind, were all, his books excepted, that he left at his death. Whatever might be the value of his books, this altered not the case, as they were placed in the hands of trustees, and the profits arising from the sale of them were to be applied to the use and benefit of the Conference for public purposes; reserving only a few legacies and a rent-charge of eighty-five pounds a year to be paid to his brother's widow, which was in fact a debt, in consideration for the copy-right of his brother's hymns."

The following account of Mr. Wesley appeared soon after his death in a very respectable publication; and was afterwards inserted in Woodfall's Diary, London, June 17, 1791:—

"His indefatigable zeal in the discharge of his duty has been long witnessed by the world; but, as mankind are not always inclined to put a generous construction on the exertions of singular talents, his motives were imputed to the love of popularity, ambition, and lucre. It now appears that he was actuated by a disinterested regard to the immortal interests of mankind. He laboured, and studied, and preached, and wrote, to propagate what he believed to be the Gospel of Christ. The intervals of these engagements were employed in governing and regulating the concerns of his numerous societies; assisting the necessities, solving the difficulties, and soothing the afflictions of his hearers. He observed so rigid a temperance, and allowed himself so little repose, that he seemed to be above the infirmities of nature, and to act independent of the earthly tenement he occupied. The recital of the occurrences

of every day of his life would be the greatest encomium.

“Had he loved wealth, he might have accumulated it without bounds. Had he been fond of power, his influence would have been worth courting by any party. I do not say he was without ambition; he had that which Christianity need not blush at, and which virtue is proud to confess. I do not mean that which is gratified by splendour and large possessions; but that which commands the hearts and affections, the homage and gratitude, of thousands. For him they felt sentiments of veneration, only inferior to those which they paid to Heaven: to him they looked as their father, their benefactor, their guide to glory and immortality: for him they fell prostrate before God, with prayers and tears, to spare his doom, and prolong his stay. Such a recompense as this is sufficient to repay the toils of the longest life. Short of this, greatness is contemptible impotence. Before this, lofty prelates bow, and princes hide their diminished heads.

“His zeal was not a transient blaze, but a steady and constant flame. The ardour of his spirit was neither damped by difficulty, nor subdued by age. This was ascribed by himself to the power of divine grace; by the world, to *enthusiasm*. Be it what it will, it is what philosophers must envy, and infidels respect; it is that which gives energy to the soul, and without which there can be no greatness or heroism.

“Why should we condemn that in religion, which we applaud in every other profession and pursuit? He had a vigour and elevation of mind, which nothing but the belief of the divine favour and presence could inspire. This threw a lustre round his infirmi-



ties, changed his bed of sickness into a triumphal car, and made his exit resemble an apotheosis rather than a dissolution.

“He was qualified to excel in every branch of literature ; he was well versed in the learned tongues, in metaphysics, in oratory, in logic, in criticism, and every requisite of a Christian Minister. His style was nervous, clear, and manly ; his preaching was pathetic and persuasive ; his Journals are artless and interesting ; and his compositions and compilations to promote knowledge and piety, were almost innumerable.

“I do not say he was without faults, or above mistakes ; but they were lost in the multitude of his excellencies and virtues.

“To gain the admiration of an ignorant and superstitious age, requires only a little artifice and address ; to stand the test of these times, when all pretensions to sanctity are stigmatized as hypocrisy, is a proof of genuine piety and real usefulness. His great object was, to revive the obsolete doctrines and extinguished spirit of the Church of England ; and they, who are its friends, cannot be his enemies. Yet for this he was treated as a fanatic and impostor, and exposed to every species of slander and persecution. Even Bishops and Dignitaries entered the lists against him ; but he never declined the combat, and generally proved victorious. He appealed to the Homilies, the Articles, and the Scriptures, as vouchers for his doctrine ; and they who could not decide upon the merits of the controversy, were witnesses of the effects of his labours ; and they judged of the tree by its fruit. It is true, he did not succeed much in the higher walks of life ; but that impeached his cause no more, than it did that of the first planters

of the Gospel. However, if he had been capable of assuming vanity on that score, he might have ranked among his friends some persons of the first distinction, who would have done honour to any party. After surviving almost all his adversaries, and acquiring respect among those who were the most distant from his principles, he lived to see the plant he had reared, spreading its branches far and wide, and inviting not only these kingdoms, but the Western world, to repose under its shade. No sect, since the first ages of Christianity, could boast a founder of such extensive talents and endowments. If he had been a candidate for literary fame, he might have succeeded to his utmost wishes; but he sought not the praise of man; he regarded learning only as the instrument of usefulness. The great purpose of his life was doing good. For this he relinquished all honour and preferment; to this he dedicated all his powers of body and mind; at all times and in all places, in season and out of season, by gentleness, by terror, by argument, by persuasion, by reason, by interest, by every motive and every inducement, he strove, with unwearied assiduity, to turn men from the error of their ways, and awaken them to virtue and religion. To the bed of sickness, or the couch of prosperity; to the prison, the hospital, the house of mourning, or the house of feasting, wherever there was a friend to serve, or a soul to save, he readily repaired; to administer assistance or advice, reproof or consolation. He thought no office too humiliating, no condescension too low, no undertaking too arduous, to reclaim the meanest of God's offspring. The souls of all men were equally precious in his sight, and the value of an immortal creature beyond all estimation.

He penetrated the abodes of wretchedness and ignorance, to rescue the profligate from perdition; and he communicated the light of life to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death. He changed the outcasts of society into useful members; civilized even savages, and filled those lips with prayer and praise that had been accustomed only to oaths and imprecations. But as the strongest religious impressions are apt to become languid, without discipline and practice, he divided his people into classes and bands, according to their attainments. He appointed frequent meetings for prayer and conversation, where they gave an account of their experience, their hopes and fears, their joys and troubles; by which means they were united to each other, and to their common profession. They became centinels upon each other's conduct, and securities for each other's character. Thus the seeds he sowed sprang up and flourished, bearing the rich fruits of every grace and virtue. Thus he governed and preserved his numerous societies, watching their improvement with a paternal care, and encouraging them to be faithful to the end.

“But I will not attempt to draw his full character, nor to estimate the extent of his labours and services. They will be best known when he shall deliver up his commission into the hands of his great Master.”

The following is a description of Mr. Wesley's person:—

“The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature was low; his habit of body, in every period of life, the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise; and, notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, and his appearance, till within a few years of his death,

vigorous and muscular. His face, for an old man, was one of the finest we have seen. A clear, smooth forehead; an aquiline nose; an eye, the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived; and a freshness of complexion, scarcely ever to be found at his years; and, impressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure. Few have seen him without being struck by his appearance: and many, who have been greatly prejudiced against him, have been known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence. In his countenance and demeanour, there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity; a sprightliness, which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and yet was accompanied with every mark of the most serene tranquillity. His aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration.

“In dress, he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity: a narrow plaited stock; a coat, with a small upright collar; no buckles at his knees; no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel; and a head as white as snow, gave an idea of something primitive and apostolic; while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person.\*

“Mr. Wesley was a voluminous writer; and as he was one of the great instruments in reviving the spirit of religion in these lands, so he led the way in those praise-worthy attempts which have been made to diffuse useful information of every kind, and to smooth the path of knowledge to the middle and lower ranks of society. Besides books on religious subjects, he published many small and cheap treatises on various branches of science; plain and

\* Whitehead's Life.

excellent grammars of the dead languages; expurgated editions of the classic authors; histories, civil and ecclesiastical; and numerous abridgments of important works.\*

\* "Mr. Wesley's principal writings are, his translation of the New Testament, with Explanatory Notes, quarto; his Journals, 6 vols. duodecimo; his Sermons, 9 volumes duodecimo; his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion; his defence of the Doctrine of Original Sin, in Answer to Dr. Taylor; his answers to Mr. Church, and Bishops Lavington and Warburton; and his Predestination Calmly Considered, besides many smaller Tracts on various important subjects. His Works were published by himself in thirty-two volumes, duodecimo, in the year 1771. An edition of them in fourteen large octavo volumes has just been completed; with his work on the New Testament in two volumes of the same size. In addition to his original compositions Mr. Wesley published upwards of a hundred and twenty different works, mostly abridged from other authors; among which are Grammars in five different languages; the Christian Library, in fifty duodecimo volumes; thirteen volumes of the Arminian Magazine; a History of England, and a general Ecclesiastical History, in four volumes each; a Compendium of Natural Philosophy, in five volumes; and an Exposition of the Old Testament, in three quarto volumes."—*Watson's Life*.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF METHO- DISM INTO LINCOLNSHIRE.

WHILST the County of Lincoln gave birth to Mr. Wesley, it was found the scene of his earliest labours in the ministry. On his ordination, at the age of twenty-two, in the year 1725, he acted as curate to his father at Wroote and Epworth for nearly three years. After his return from America, and the subsequent happy change which he experienced in the application of Gospel truth to his heart, which was in the year 1738, he does not appear to have visited his native town, nor to have preached in any part of Lincolnshire, until June, 1742, when in his Journal he writes:—"Sat. 5. It being many years since I had been in Epworth before, I went to an inn, in the middle of the town, not knowing whether there were any left in it now who would not be ashamed of my acquaintance. But an old servant of my father's, with two or three poor women, presently found me out. I asked her, 'Do you know any in Epworth who are in earnest to be saved?' She answered, 'I am, by the grace of God; and I know I am saved through faith.' I asked, 'Have you then the peace of God? Do you know that He has forgiven your sins?' She replied, 'I thank God, I know it well; and many here can say the same thing.'"

On the following day he stood upon his father's tomb-stone and preached to a vast concourse of peo-

ple, the curate having refused him the use of the church; and who also, more politely, as a true son of the church, forbade him the sacrament on his next visit to the town, which was a few months afterwards. Mr. Wesley notices the circumstance as follows:—"Sat. JAN. 1, 1743. In the evening I reached Epworth. *Sunday 2.* At five, I preached on, 'So is every one that is born of the Spirit.' About eight I preached from my father's tomb, on Heb. viii. 11. Many from the neighbouring towns asked, if it would not be well, as it was sacrament Sunday, for them to receive it. I told them, 'By all means: But it would be more respectful first to ask Mr. Romley, the curate's leave.' One did so, in the name of the rest; to whom he said, 'Pray tell Mr. Wesley, I shall not give *him* the sacrament; for he is not *fit*.'

"How wise a God is our God! There could not have been so fit a place under heaven, where this should befall me first, as my father's house, the place of my nativity, and the very place where, 'according to the strictest sect of our religion,' I had so long 'lived a Pharisee!' It was also fit, in the highest degree, that he who repelled me from that very table, where I had myself so often distributed the bread of life, should be one who owed his all in this world to the tender love which my father had shown to his, as well as personally to himself."

His visits to Epworth after this were as frequent as most other places. The next town of any note in Lincolnshire at which he is found to preach, is Grimsby. This was on Oct. 24, 1743, where he remained three or four days. Both at Epworth and Grimsby his preaching was attended with powerful effects. Societies were formed, and a foundation

laid for more extended usefulness. About this time it would appear that preachers were sent into Lincolnshire. There are however no printed Minutes of Conference until 1744; and even then the stations of the preachers do not appear; nor were they printed until 1765. And there is also a chasm of sixteen years, from 1749 to 1765, in which the annual Minutes were not published. In 1749 these records present twenty circuits in England, seven in Ireland, two in Scotland, and two in Wales. There are no names of preachers appended to this list. Probably two were sent together for the most part to each circuit.

From the year 1742, if not earlier, to within a few years of 1765, when the first printed stations appear, the whole of Lincolnshire, together with a considerable part of Nottinghamshire, formed but one circuit. Into this vast tract of country two or three preachers were sent to cultivate its moral wastes. Their labours of course must have been very great, and their privations of no ordinary extent.

In 1758, according to some account of Mr. Thomas Lee, which may be found in the Arminian Magazine, vol. iii. p. 141, he was stationed in Lincolnshire. His plan of labour was this:—He spent two months on the eastern side of the county, preaching in different places, and superintending the affairs of the little societies; and then two months on the west. He says nothing of any helper or colleague in these labours, though it is probable he had *one*; and the manner of his changing from east to west every two months, appears to prove he had no more. His labours on this extensive field were successful; and the testimony he has left of the societies, does



equal credit to him and to them. They were "loving and teachable," says he; and as a proof that in all other respects they gave him entire satisfaction, he remarks, "I know not if ever I shall love a people better on this side eternity."

In 1765, Lincolnshire was divided into two circuits, —Epworth and Grimsby. The next year, these names were changed for Lincolnshire East, and Lincolnshire West, forming the county into two important Methodistical divisions.\* In 1776 the division of East and West disappears from the stations, and Gainsborough is introduced, together with the resumption of Epworth and Grimsby, thus forming

\* Mr. Robert Costerdine, in a short account of himself, which appeared in the Methodist Magazine, 1814, says, "I was, in the year 1764, appointed for the Epworth Circuit, which was then six hundred miles round, and required twelve weeks travelling: it is now divided into nine circuits. Sometimes a mob followed me with volleys of oaths and curses, for a mile together. I was thus treated for three months together in Boston, but I was neither afraid nor hurt by them. The Lord gave me strength according to my day, and love, that is better felt than expressed. I laboured one quarter in the Epworth side of the circuit, and then went into the Grimsby side." After relating several interesting circumstances which attended him in the first year of his itinerancy, he went to the first Conference that was held at Manchester, when he was appointed to the East of Lincolnshire, with Mr. Rd. Boardman, who was, he says, "a very agreeable companion." And remarks also, "We spent a very comfortable year together, though we met with much persecution when going into new places. The people were very kind, and used every means to render us comfortable; and the success with which the Lord crowned our labours, more than recompensed us for all the difficulties and dangers through which we had to pass. Great was the love which God gave me to precious souls, nor was I weary in doing or suffering his will."—It appears from this extract, that until 1765, Lincolnshire comprised but one circuit. Afterwards,

three circuits of the county. Nottingham and Leicester appear for the first time as circuits, whilst Derbyshire is discontinued.

In 1786, Horncastle stands as a circuit, in addition to the other three Lincolnshire circuits. In 1795, Boston appears at the head of a circuit. Barrow, in 1796; Spalding, in 1797, and Boston disappears; Louth, in 1799, and Spalding disappears; Lincoln, in 1801; Spilsby, in 1802; Grantham, in 1803; Winterton, in 1804, and Barrow dropped; Stamford, in 1808; Boston appears again in 1812; Market Raisin and Alford, in 1813; Spalding appears again the same year; Sleaford and Brigg, in 1815; Barton, in 1817, and Winterton disappears. Here are sixteen circuits as they now stand upon the minutes, and which comprise the whole of the county, with the exception of James Deeping and Crowland, in the Peterborough circuit, and which circuit was divided from Stamford in the year 1825. And probably there may be two or three villages also on the side of Wisbeach. A few of the circuits extend their skirts into other counties: Stamford, for instance, into Rutland and Northampton; Lincoln, into Nottingham; and Grantham into Leicestershire, and also to one village in Nottinghamshire.

The number of members included in these circuits, as returned to the Conference in 1834, is as follows:—

when divided into two parts, three preachers were appointed to each circuit. But Mr. Costerdine's name does not stand at either of the Lincolnshire circuits in 1765, the first year the stations of the preachers are appended to the printed Minutes. Some alteration in his appointment might take place after the Conference, which is occasionally done; and the account which he gives of himself is most likely to be correct.

Epworth .....	590	Boston .....	1001
Grimsby .....	840	Alford .....	840
Gainsborough.....	1021	Market Raisin .....	790
Horncastle .....	984	Spalding .....	628
Louth .....	1677	Brigg .....	669
Lincoln .....	1700	Sleaford .....	911
Spilsby .....	1000	Barton.....	763
Grantham, .....	1085		
Stamford,.....	413	Total in Society,....	<u>14,721</u>

The population of the county is 317,400. The ratio of Methodism is therefore one, to about twenty-one of the inhabitants. Children and persons of all descriptions are counted in the population; but in the number of Methodists neither children, nor those of the regular congregation who are not immediately in society, are calculated. And the congregations which sit under the Wesleyan ministry, comprise, on an average, thrice the number of persons there are members of society. This gives to Methodism, a religious influence, which is more than mediate, over one-sixth of the population of Lincolnshire.

Probably in no other county has Methodism spread so extensively, and taken so firm a hold on society, as in Lincolnshire. It has found an entrance into every market town, and has measured the length and breadth of the whole division;—from Barton on the north, to Market-Deeping on the south; and from Newton-upon-Trent on the west, to Ingoldmels on the east. There are few villages of any size, in which there is not a society raised up, and supplied as well with regular preaching; or where the gospel trumpet by the Methodist preachers has not been repeatedly sounded.

But the ingress was not made, and this state of

things brought about without opposition. Persecution in many parts raged with a fury that was hardly to be exceeded. A stout and demon-like resistance was made against the first propagators of saving truth. Satan seemed to sway his sceptre over the minds of the people in unmolested reign; and to maintain his dominion and keep his goods in peace, his power and artifice were variously exerted. The inhabitants in certain districts were reduced to a comparative state of semi-barbarism;—a condition which was sufficiently attested by the treatment they gave to those heralds of mercy who first came amongst them “to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins by faith that is in Christ Jesus.” But “the heathen raged,” and “the people imagined”—and propagated many “vain” and strange “things.” They were not only unwilling to be disturbed in their sins, but bent upon opposing the light of truth, which develops “the hidden things of darkness, and makes manifest the counsels of the hearts.” Having been so long accustomed to vicious habits, which were nurtured by ignorance and moral depravity, they were prepared to perpetuate almost any act of wantonness and cruelty.

This was a state of society too commonly met with in the early part of the eighteenth century amongst the agricultural villagers, and especially in Lincolnshire, a county somewhat insulated by distance from the more populous towns where a mixture of character is found, which is known to operate in a way that counteracts and checks the tendency there is in some to violate the common laws and usages of civilized society. But in these extensive districts, where employment is principally dependent on the culti-

vation of the farm, the inhabitants were cast in a similar mould, and they appeared to have but one way. Rusticity and ruthlessness were combined in their character. The Methodist *Parson*, as he was called, on his regular or occasional visits, evidently afforded them delightful sport. He was not of their *way*. Hence he came among them as one of a strange tongue, and from a strange country. He wished to teach them a better way than the one they were pursuing,—the way of truth and holiness, and which leads to heaven. But looking upon him as an enemy to their pursuits of pleasure, in carnal and sinful indulgences;—which, as a minister of righteousness, it was his duty to depict, and then to denounce, as exposing them to the vengeance of God; expostulating with them, and exhorting them “to flee from the wrath to come;”—they would treat him as one guilty of the vilest atrocity, and as “a fellow” not worthy to live. The hostility which was shown to the ambassadors of peace who entered their territories, exemplified the malignant nature of human depravity in a very high degree; the mind being deprived in many instances of the menacing aspect of wholesome laws, and of the example of persons of respectability, guided by correct views of the claims of justice and the rights of conscience. Under the influence of such depraved passions, these “christian savages” convened in large numbers, when they assumed all the fierceness of a lawless mob. And these assemblies were headed for the most part by some person whose imprecations were most vociferous, and which secured him the spontaneous consent of the party that he should act as their chieftain. Thus marshalled, they sallied forth in the inglorious enterprise of defending the dominions

and usurpation of Apollyon, against the legitimate rights of the Prince of Peace. Sometimes these frays were led on by a blustering influential farmer, who cared about as much for religion and the world to come; as the swine in his sty; or it might be the 'squire of the parish, who was a sort of feudal lord in the country village; and not unfrequently the clergyman himself, either openly or covertly, was the abettor of these outrages on civil order and decorum. Instigated as they were, and the attack being commenced, the poor preacher was most roughly handled:—sludge and filth of various descriptions were heaped upon him in abundance; sticks, stones, brick-bats, rotten eggs, and every kind of missile were fearlessly hurled at him. On some occasions, to escape without being maimed, or even with life, might be considered as next to miraculous. Indeed, the providence of God was strikingly manifest in their preservation.

It required no ordinary courage to go forth as pioneers in this moral warfare. And many of them were men of "a stout countenance," and of a courageous heart, or they could not have endured what they did. They were perfectly satisfied that the labours in which they were engaged, were labours appointed them of God. A sort of necessity was laid upon them to go forth and preach the gospel. Their minds were impressed with a conviction of responsibility to God, which constrained them to persevere in the work of the ministry, similar to the apostle of the gentiles, when he made the acknowledgment, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." The consequence was, they looked to God, and strength was proportioned to their day. They succeeded in laying the foundation in these

troubulous times, the Lord working with them and by them; and the superstructure has been gradually rising ever since. Many thousands of enemies were subdued to the faith of Christ; and who in their subjection became ornaments both of civil and religious society; some of whom have long passed from the militant to the triumphant church; whilst others remain to be matured, and to live that they may benefit and bless mankind.

And although considerable numbers may yet remain unsubdued in heart, and hostile in sentiment to evangelical truth, and opposed in practice to the precepts of the gospel, and which continue to be announced by the Methodist Preachers as formerly, there are few to be found so maliciously and inveterately disposed as to indulge in the barbarous practice of missile persecution; or to subject a street preacher to any bodily injury, to penalties, or imprisonment. Now that such a change has taken place, by the dissemination of religious light and knowledge, which pervades, more or less, all ranks of society,—the Methodist and Dissenter “may dwell safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba,” “and none shall make them afraid.” The pious of all persuasions behold in this alteration of the moral aspect of things, the progressive fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, and are led to anticipate the period as not far distant, when it shall receive its full accomplishment; which declares, “The voice of him that cryeth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be laid low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the

glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

That the circumstances of persecution to which allusion is made, and which were opposed to the first Methodist Preachers in Lincolnshire, may not appear assertions without sufficient proof, two or three examples, taken from a number of facts, are here subjoined. Many of a similar kind are recorded, but many more were endured, of which no written document remains, with the exception of what is to be found in the book of God, and which will be manifest at the day of judgment, and announced in the presence and hearing of an assembled world. Then will be seen "the patience and the faith of the saints."

On a visit which Mr. Wesley paid to Boston, June 1780, he remarks on the civil behaviour and kind treatment he met with at that time, in contrast with two of his preachers some years previously, in the shameful abuse which Mr. Mather experienced at Boston, and Mr. Mitchell at Wrangle, a few miles distant. The case of the latter took place on Sunday the 7th of August, 1751, and is narrated as follows, by Mr. Watmough, in his "History of Methodism in the Neighbourhood and City of Lincoln," &c.\*

"Mr. Thomas Mitchell, above named, begun preaching about five o'clock that morning, and about

\* He appears to have taken the account from the Journal of Mr. Wesley, vol. iii. p. 97, 8vo. edition, printed in 1809; and also from vols. iii. and xv. of the Arminian or Methodist Magazine, articles, Mr. Mitchell, and John Gilbert, of Wrangle; to which works the reader is directed for a more ample account of this affair.



six, the constables came at the head of a large mob, who violently broke into the place, and, pulling down the preacher, put an end to their devotions. Then, dragging Mr. Mitchell to the public house, they kept him in custody till four o'clock in the afternoon, when one of the constables, seeming to relent, said, he would go to the Minister, and see if they might then release him. But, returning with directions *not to let him go yet*, they took him out to the mob, who hurried him to a pool, deep enough to take him to the neck, and threw him right in. Several times he attempted to get out of this perilous situation; but they as often pitched him in again, and so rendered his efforts vain. They insisted on his wading through the pool seven times; and, seeing no alternative, he complied with their request. They now permitted him to come out. But as soon as he had done so, a ruffian standing ready with a pot of white paint, and a brush, painted him over from head to foot. In this state he was conducted to the public house again, and made prisoner a second time, where we shall leave him for a moment to muse on his fate.

“In the mean time the mob proceeded to abuse Mr. Mitchell's friends, beating them shamefully, and greatly damaging their goods. They moreover seized on five of them, and dragging them away, threw them also into the pool, and so returned to Mr. Mitchell again.

“In or near the place was a great pond of water, ten or twelve feet deep, and railed in on every side. To the side of this pit, wet and weary as he was, they dragged the preacher, and four of them seizing his legs and arms, began to swing him to and fro, in order to throw him in. ‘And now,’ says he, ‘my

flesh, for a moment, shrunk at the thought of that instant death which seemed to await me.' But while in this critical situation, his tremulous feelings instantly left him! and he felt he could say, 'The will of the Lord be done.' At that instant they precipitated him in as far as they could.

"The violence of the fall, and the water together, soon took his senses away from him, so that while in the water he was conscious of nothing; and, it can only be attributed to the special Providence of God, controlling the minds of some of these men, that he escaped alive from that terrible place.

"Several of the persecutors became unwilling to see him die in the water; and so, watching until he rose to the surface, caught hold of his clothes with a long pole, pulled him out, and left him lying on the beach. After some time he came to himself a little, and found only two men standing by him. One of these, very kindly, began to assist him, lifting him up, and desiring him to go with him: and so, leading him to a cottage, treated him in a hospitable manner, and put him to bed.

"But, repenting of their clemency, the mob pursued him to this hospitable retreat; and, as there were none who could effectually resist, dragged him again, exhausted as he was, out of bed into the street, swearing they would take one of his limbs, except he would promise never to visit that place again. But, though the body of this man of God was in the hands of his enemies, his mind was beyond their dominion and control. He had waded the pool at their instance, because he could do it without sin; but, to promise what now was demanded, was a concern of a different nature; and his soul was too manly, and too christian, to com-

ply. Another person, however, who had hold of Mr. Mitchell, clinging to him to help him, promised for him; and the mob, pretending to be satisfied, let him go, and the man, who had treated him so kindly before, took him, and put him to bed again.

“But some of the mob now repaired to the Minister again, (who is said to have sat in the steeple, witnessing the scene,) for further direction and advice; and, returning with orders to ‘take him out of the parish,’ they pulled him again from the bed, wrapped him in an old coat, his own being wet and covered with paint, and taking him about a mile from the place, selected a hill, upon which when they had set him, they gave three cheers, as if they had gained some notable victory; and at each of the cheers, cried out, ‘God save the King, and the Devil take the preacher.’ And thus they left him, without a penny in his pocket, and without a friend, none daring to come near him.”

About the same period, a similar affray might be noticed, which took place on the other side of the county, at Newton-upon-Trent. The society at this village was in existence before the year 1750, “about which time,” says Mr. Watmough, “they held their meetings, in the house of a person of the name of Skelton, a respectable resident in the place, whom the mob treated severely for harbouring the Methodists under his roof. They broke all the windows in his house to shivers. Next they went to the stable, and, cutting the mane and the tail of the preacher’s horse, proceeded to tar and cover it with feathers.—Of the spiritual state of the Newton Society at that time, I have been able to collect no particular account, save that the good lady of the house, Mrs. Skelton, while the mob were breaking their windows,

remained calm in her own room, singing hymns of praise to God. This gracious woman, 'of whom the world was not worthy,' finished her life in the most happy way. When on the point of dying, though weak and feeble, she lifted her arms, and, clasping her hands in each other, exultingly exclaimed, 'I am going to be with Jesus!—glory! glory! glory!'—and so yielded up the ghost."

Circumstances of a similar kind to these might be multiplied to a vast extent; but these are sufficient to furnish some idea of the spirit by which Methodism was assailed in the early stages of its career in the county of Lincoln, and in many other parts as well. The country magistrates might easily have prevented these outrages had they been disposed to attempt it; but too many of them perverted justice, and instead of standing forth "a terror to evil doers" in the exercise of the authority with which their office invested them, they were too generally inclined to patronize the clamour of the mob, against the innocent sufferers in their righteous cause. An honourable exception to this, in the conduct of a magistrate near Epworth, is humourously related by Mr. Wesley, and which shows with what good effect in society a gentleman of discernment and integrity may fill the chair of a justice of the peace:—

"JUNE 9, 1742. I rode over to a neighbouring town, to wait upon a Justice of Peace, a man of candour and understanding; before whom (I was informed) their angry neighbours had carried a whole waggon-load of these new heretics. But when he asked what they had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgot. At length one said, 'Why, they pretended to be better than other people: And besides, they prayed from

morning to night.' Mr. S. asked, 'But have they done nothing besides?' 'Yes, Sir,' said an old man: 'An't please your worship, they have *converted* my wife. 'Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! And now she is as quiet as a lamb.' 'Carry them back, carry them back,' replied the Justice, 'and let them convert all the scolds in the town.'

Whilst an extensive change for the better has taken place in the tone of moral feeling in the county; it must be admitted that much alloy remains to be purged away. A great work has yet to be effected, which will require the persevering exertions of the faithful, before all the barren wastes of Lincolnshire are brought into a proper state of moral and religious fertility. But the tide of events has been such, as to exhibit a striking contrast betwixt the present and former times. The agriculturalists, who were so rude and barbarous, are rising in intelligence and pious influence, and are as forward in zeal and religious benevolence, as any other class of people in the kingdom. The magistrates are more generally prompt and impartial in awarding justice, and in asserting the rights of individuals, as allowed by equity, against the encroachments of petty despotism, the lawless and the intolerant. As to the clergy, who were amongst the foremost in carrying on a free trade against the sectarists, they find they might as well attempt to stop the influx of the tides, as stem "the enthusiasm of the Methodists;" and therefore some of them allow it quietly to have its course; whilst others of them, are taking the mania themselves, and are not ashamed of having the epithet of *Methodist* applied to them, shunning not to declare the whole counsel of God, and are zealous for the Lord

of Hosts. These are circumstances of a very encouraging nature, and are a cause of thankfulness to God. With propriety, the devout exclamation may be uttered; "What hath God wrought!"

" When he first the work begun,  
Small and feeble was his day :  
Now the word doth swiftly run,  
Now it wins its widening way."

In a sermon of Mr. Wesley's, on "The Former Times," he particularly notices the great change which had taken place in the manners of society since the commencement of his public career as a reformer of the morals of the nation, and in which career of most important usefulness he had been engaged for upwards of fifty years. He notices the very general suppression of savage barbarity where it had been so prevalent in certain parts of the country, and the increasing liberality of sentiment as to religion which had taken place. He also states certain opinions which were entertained by individuals, respecting the cause of this favourable change in the aspect of morals and religion, both in Great Britain and other parts of Europe. Let the cause of this change be attributed to what circumstance it might, he was satisfied that genuine Christianity had never been in a more prosperous state, since the days of the apostles, than it was at the period he wrote. And no man probably was better capable than Mr. Wesley, of determining this point. His opportunities for acquiring information were extensively favourable. And the work of God in the earth was to him a subject of deep interest, and with which he had a very familiar acquaintance. His perpetual travelling throughout the kingdom, and extending his

visits and labours into some other countries as well, in which he continued, not only for a few years, but to the end of an unusually protracted life, which brought to his notice a variety of subjects and changing circumstances. And his observations on men and things and public manners, displayed a sagacity of thought and perception, which were rarely if ever equalled, but never excelled ; and to which the product of his pen bears unquestionable testimony. At the time he published the sermon alluded to, he was engaged in writing his Ecclesiastical History, a work which led him into deep research, to ascertain the state and progress of religion in general throughout the world since the commencement of christianity, which enabled him to draw his inferences with the greatest possible accuracy. Furnished, therefore, with such acquisitions it may be confidently relied upon, that his statements were not made at random.

Fifty years have now elapsed since Mr. Wesley contrasted the former with present times, and thence deduced his conclusions in favor of the latter, over the "times" in which he had previously laboured, and antecedently to which had long gone by. During this half century, the influence of religion and a tolerant spirit have proportionably progressed. In Lincolnshire this is evidently the case, if numbers in the Methodist society at least, form any just criterion by which an estimate can be made. At the death of Mr. Wesley, forty-five years ago, there were in this county 2509 members of society ; now there are 14,721. So mightily has the word of the Lord prevailed, by the instrumentality of Methodism, independently of the successes which have attended other evangelical denominations, in the county of Lincoln.

## PART II.

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### CHAPTER V.

THE GRANTHAM CIRCUIT.—GREAT GONERBY, GRANTHAM, AND MUSTON, THE FIRST PLACES IN WHICH SOCIETIES WERE FORMED, WHILST CONNECTED WITH THE EPWORTH AND DERBYSHIRE CIRCUITS.

THE introduction of preaching and the formation of a Methodist society in this circuit, appears to have been first effected at Great Gonerby, which was as early as the year 1770, if not a few years previously to that date. Gonerby, therefore, may be looked upon as the Mother Church of Methodism in the circuit; although it found its way it seems into some other villages, independently of any immediate influence exerted on the part of the society at this place. The Rev. Dr. Ford, of Melton, and the Rev. W. Dodwell, of Welby, were principal instruments of planting the seeds of piety in several parts of the circuit, and which were either directly or indirectly committed to the fostering care of the Methodist ministry. These two clergymen were bright and shining lights in their day, and were the means of disseminating gospel truth to a great extent in the counties of Lincoln and Leicester. Both of them were evangelical Arminians, and owed much to Methodism themselves for the grace they had attained,



and were not ashamed, as many are, who have lighted their torch at the methodistical altar, to acknowledge the people from whom, under God, their spiritual information had been derived.

It cannot be accurately ascertained who was the first Methodist Preacher that preached at Gonerby, nor how the preaching was introduced. The first members are gone, and no document is to be had. It is recollected to have been said that a soldier in his regimentals addressed the people out of doors upon the Green, and who was spoken of as being the first Methodist that was heard to preach. Dr. Palmer, it is judged, who was a pious man, and for some time curate of Gonerby, but who resided at Grantham, was the means of arousing a few to serious thoughts of the world to come. He was in the habit also of meeting a small number of poor persons, for the purpose of religious conversation and prayer, in a room of the old parsonage house, which was divided into tenements, and which then stood upon the site of a garden on the north side of the church-yard. These tenements were occupied by three women, who were among the first members of society, and whom Dr. Palmer used to meet before Thomas Emery opened his house to the preachers. Their names were Hannah Everit, Elizabeth Sneeton, and Ostley Mann. Thomas and Rebecca Emery were also of the first members. They were joined in succession afterwards by Susannah Colbord, Thomas and Alice Huckerby, and Samuel and Elizabeth Curtis. These have all died in the faith. Thomas Huckerby was brother of Mr. Huckerby, of Bingham, now in his eighty-eighth year. Ostley Mann was a Scotch-woman, and the widow of a soldier, and was

principally supported by the alms of pious people. She died at the advanced age of ninety-two, at the house of Elizabeth Clay, who had the care of her in her latter days. Her faculties were considerably impaired as to temporal things, but she could speak intelligibly of the things of God: they had made a deep impression on her heart, and the Holy Spirit continued to afford her the joyful feeling of the truths which she had believed in her younger days, even when her heart and her flesh failed her. In the case of this poor widow, charity was not permitted to become cold and frozen in the bosom of those around her, who loved the Lord, for the want of opportunity to enliven it. Her protracted life, even to age and feebleness extreme, called into exercise the grace of faith, and hope, and charity, on the part of her christian associates; by which means the world was led to witness the influence of religion in their lives, and the love which they had one to another. The principles of the gospel inculcate upon those who profess to be governed by them, that they love not in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth. This fruit of christianity was apparent in the first members of the Gonerby society. Being a native of North Britain, Ostley Mann had no parish to which she could look for the legal allowance of a poor rate as in England. She died in 1798.

Some of the persons above named, having obtained an impression in favor of the Methodist doctrines, would be led to hear them it may be supposed wherever they had an opportunity of so doing. And it is recollected that they have spoken of going down as far as North Scarle, to hear preaching and attend other means of grace, among the Methodists. In this village the cause had been established at an

early period, and seems to have been the first in these parts to have cherished the seeds sown by the Methodist ministry. It is not unlikely, therefore, but that an invitation would be given a preacher, with whom they would meet on one of these visits, to come over to Gonerby and help them. And it is as likely he would accept the invitation, and with all cheerfulness extend the field of labour fourteen or fifteen miles farther south. This would be no inconsiderable distance from Epworth, the circuit town.

Thomas Emery, and his wife Rebecca, were the first to open their house to admit preaching, and where the means of grace were continued for many years. This dwelling-house was their own property, and situate at the farther end of West-street, just by the plot of ground, recently and very generously given to the society, by Mr. Thomas Eminson, on which to erect a new chapel. It has long since been demolished, and some small tenements built where it stood. Thomas was a native of Gonerby, the son of Thomas and Grace Emery, and according to the parish register was christened, February 22nd, 1729, and was buried May 14th, 1804, aged about seventy-five years. Rebecca was buried on the 11th of June, 1798, in the sixty-fifth year of her age. The end of both was joyous and triumphant.

A consequence of the light of the glorious gospel being brought to shine in a place is, that it makes manifest the hidden works of darkness; when the turpitude of depraved nature, in many, is exasperated to direct and open hostility against the principal instruments who hold forth the mirror of truth; and against those persons also who choose to walk in its light, and who submit themselves to the word of re-

conciliation. "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and it was not long before this enmity began to make its appearance at Gonerby, in persecuting the preachers and the few individuals who had courage sufficient to "do the truth," and to "come to the light that their deeds might be made manifest that they were wrought in God." Means of a very disreputable kind, and such as are diabolical also, were frequently used to dispossess the Methodists of the footing they had gained in the village. Horrid imprecations, and the vilest language, were not spared them. The windows of Thomas Emery's house were frequently broken; and the room in which the means were held would be fumigated with the odour of assafoetida, and other offensive scents. The putrid carcases of small animals, and various kinds of filth, would also be cast into the room amongst the congregation, whilst engaged in the solemn acts of divine worship, or be thrown at them as they walked along the streets on their return home. On one occasion the preacher's horse was turned into another person's field, and then taken to the pinfold; and out of pretence for damages done to the produce of the ground into which the horse was reputed to have clandestinely entered, a few of the nobles of the parish, who met for legislative discussion on the subject, levied a fine of five shillings upon the preacher. Rebecca Emery, who appears to have been quite intrepid in defence of the good cause which she had espoused, went before this conclave of judges and packed jury, to receive judgment for this unsuspecting and necessitated offence of the poor horse. She defended her client nobly, and when she found that her argument availed nothing, but that *might* was determined to compel *right* to surrender, she

joyfully suffered the wrong, for righteousness' sake, and advanced the money out of her own purse, rather than allow the stranger in her house—a messenger of peace and mercy—to sustain a loss from the hand of persecution whilst she was able to bear it herself. Rebecca's speech on this occasion, together with the conduct of her oppressors, produced such an effect on the mind of one of the farmers present, more candid than the others, and who expected that nothing was to be done but what was just and right, that he exclaimed, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" By which interjections he expressed his surprise at the manner of their proceedings.

On a subsequent occasion, this person interposed more immediately in behalf of Thomas Emery and the Methodists at Gonerby, against a confederation of the farmers of the place, to compel Thomas to capitulate to their wishes in giving up the religious meetings which were held in his house, and consequently of suppressing Methodism in the village. A proposition was made that none of them should allow him the use of a team, which had previously been granted him, either on loan or hire, for the purpose of carrying faggots with which he used to heat his oven, and in other forms to place obstacles in his way of prosecuting his trade, which was that of a baker. The gentleman alluded to, opposed the measure, and gave to the persons, who thought he had been one with them, an admonitory caution; which, it is said, had a salutary effect. His advice to them was in accordance with the judgment delivered by Gamaliel to a council of the Jews, of which he was member, who were bent upon silencing the apostles and driving Christianity out of Jerusalem. "Refrain from these men," says he,

“and let them alone: for if this counsel, or this work be of man, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” This resistance to the bigotry of the more influential inhabitants of Gonerby, and to the spirit which opposed itself to methodism in them, was given by Mr. Balm, father of Miss Elizabeth Balm, who was afterwards married to Mr. Robert Christian of Skillington. She was a truly amiable woman and one of the excellent of the earth. By her union with Mr. Christian she left three sons and three daughters, all of whom are in society, and endeavouring to tread in the steps of their pious ancestors, who now rest with God.

The little band of individuals that comprised the first society at Gonerby, having endured several storms which were raised against its continuance, met with a reinforcement in Mr. James Roe, of Nottingham, who came to reside in the village, and immediately united himself with them. This was in the year 1772. Previously to his removal to Gonerby, he had been a member of society for six years. He first heard the preaching of the Methodists in the year 1761, when they occupied a small house in Crosland Court, Red Lion Street. On one of Mr. Wesley's occasional visits to Nottingham, he delivered a sermon at the Malt Cross, under which Mr. Roe was powerfully wrought upon, and led to bow with full submission to the yoke of Christ. Immediately on this he joined the society, which was in 1766, when he made the hundredth member in that town. This circumstance of number, associated in the mind of Mr. Roe a coincidence betwixt it and the parable of the lost sheep. In after years he would frequently advert to this incident, as afford-

ing profitable reflections to himself, from its connexion with the parable, which taught him to consider the compassionate regard of his heavenly Shepherd, who went after him into the wilderness whither he had strayed like unto a lost sheep; and having been found of him, was brought into his fold and placed among the ninety and nine, who were enrolled as his people, and the sheep of his pasture. On his arrival at Gonerby, he was soon called upon to act in the capacity of a leader, and also that of a local preacher; which offices he sustained for the space of near fifty-eight years. After residing at Gonerby for a number of years, he removed to Grantham, where he continued to live, and carry on the business of a hosier and worsted manufacturer, until within a short time of his death; when he returned to Gonerby to spend the remainder of his days with his daughter, Mrs. Pinner, who resided in the house which he had formerly occupied. It was here that he finished his course of suffering and of trial, depending on the alone merits of a crucified Redeemer, on the 17th of November, 1831, aged eighty-three years, having been a member of the Wesleyan society sixty-five years.

Mr. Roe was a man of an excellent christian character, of a remarkable meek and quiet spirit, and that always maintained "a good report of them who are without." He was kind and hospitable to strangers; and twice he had the honor (and such he esteemed it to be) of entertaining the venerable Founder of Methodism at his house, when on his journeys either to or from the north. His labours as a local preacher were extensive and constant. In this department of spiritual duties he was a standing supply for the pulpits at Gonerby and Grantham, when any disappointment was experienced in the absence

of expected preachers; besides fulfilling his own engagements. And for a series of years he was the only local preacher within many miles of Gonerby; which, of necessity, upon a willing mind, would devolve much preaching in the regular way. Much might be said in commendation of this good man, would the limits of this work allow it; but "he rests from his labours, and his works do follow him."

A considerable difference has been distinguished betwixt places, in the reception given to the gospel by the inhabitants, on its introduction, and the subsequent progress which it has made amongst them. In some instances it has met with an easy admission into towns and villages, and has gained a rapid and extensive influence over the minds of the people, in subjugating them to the faith of Christ, without any particular hostility from the irreligious and profane: whilst in other places, the strongest prejudices have been opposed to its reception and propagation, which required the patient endurance of the preachers, and the few friends who stood by them, to gain even a footing for the ark of the gospel: and its advancements afterwards were but slowly made, and attended with considerable difficulties. To those who are acquainted with the state of society in Grantham, for a number of years that is past, and who possess ability to judge of the merits of methodism, and have had opportunity to watch its movements in the town; a propriety, in the latter description of hostility, when applied to this place, will probably appear. And this will be perceived more distinctly when the circumstances of the society are detailed. The jealousies, evil surmisings, and persecutions through which



it has had to pass, in its rise and progress, have been of no ordinary extent. Contemptuous epithets, scoffs and scorns, have been had to endure by persons who volunteered their services in the cause of Christ by a union with the Methodists. The respectability of the world, so denominated, in any of its forms, has done but little in the way of patronising methodism in the town of Grantham. High church principles, deeply tinged with Palagianism,—Antinomianism, ignorance, and wicked rudeness, have raised a brazen front, and manifested a rampant forwardness to devour or annihilate the religion of the heart,—a religion which is invariably associated with holiness of life;—and which is the religion of methodism and of the bible. But whilst the society had to contend for existence against opposition of this sort, for a series of years, the kind hand of God enabled it to maintain the struggle, and by repeated accessions, and a gradual prosperity, its number in the town alone now amounts to upwards of three hundred members.

It is in the recollection of persons now living, that Methodist preachers were in the habit of occasionally preaching out of doors, at the entrance of Sandpit Lane, by Westgate, previously to the year 1776; and that they used to come to Grantham from Gonerby, when on their regular visits to the latter place. The preachers in the connexion of the Countess of Huntingdon would also take their stand in the street, and address the people, having on their canonicals of gown and bands. They occupied a room, in which they more regularly preached, in the house of Mr. Streeton, in Sandpit Lane, where he carried on the business of bookseller and stationer. It was in this house that the first Meth-

odist society was formed, and where also their religious meetings were held.

The rough and uncourteous manner in which the preachers were treated, both within and out of doors in Sandpit Lane, induced those in the connexion of Lady Huntingdon, to finally quit the scene of action, as one too dangerous to hazard farther enterprise. The perseverance of the Wesleyan preachers, in following up the stroke which had been given by the combined efforts of both parties, was attended with a degree of success. The truths delivered, to which some were disposed to listen, were accompanied with the power of God to a few individuals, in bringing them to the foot of the cross, and to unite themselves together in christian fellowship. This society constituted the seed from which the present produce of methodism in Grantham has principally arisen.

Mr. Robert Derry, who was a conspicuous Methodist in the town for many years, was one of the members of this first society. He was a native of Wymondham, in Leicestershire. At the age of manhood, he went up to London, where he wrought at his trade. During his stay there, he sat for some time under the ministry of the Rev. Messrs. Romaine and G. Whitfield, by whose instrumentality he was awakened to a sense of sin, and brought to submit to the claims of the gospel. A short time after this he came to reside at Grantham; and possessing a relish for divine things, on the Calvinists coming to preach in the town, he resorted to their ministry, as also to that of the Methodists, whilst they laboured conjunctively in Sandpit Lane. And subsequently, when the preachers of Lady Huntingdon retired, Mr. Derry continued to hear the Methodists, and

to share with them in all the obloquy and reproach which were cast upon them. He had imbibed, however, from the doctrinal statements advanced by the ministers to whose labours he was indebted for his first religious impressions, the peculiarities of Calvinism. But at certain times he had secret misgivings, that the views into which he had been led on these points, were not scripturally correct. In some conversation which he had with the Rev. Mr. Pugh, of Rauceby, on christian experience, he took occasion to express his dissatisfaction with the Calvinian creed; when that clergyman recommended to his candid and careful perusal, Mr. Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism, as a work of great value, and calculated to satisfy his enquiries. He immediately procured them, and read the work with deep interest and perfect satisfaction. After this, he continued a steady and confirmed believer in the Arminianism of the truly amiable and apostolic Fletcher, and the Wesleys.

Mrs. Derry was wont to accompany her husband to the means of grace in Sandpit Lane, and "whose heart," like that of Lydia, it appears, "the Lord opened to attend unto the things which were spoken of" the preachers. And it was shown by an anxious wish which she expressed to Mr. Derry to have the preachers invited to their house. He thought it a subject of importance, and one which required serious deliberation; and therefore suggested to his wife the propriety of waiting awhile, that they might count the cost. Her feelings, however, having moved her with greater rapidity to a conclusion, than the cooler calculations of her husband, on the next visit of a preacher to the place, she could refrain no longer, but ventured to request him to

"come into her house, and abide there." Having presumed to take this step, the disposition of Mr. Derry became at once reciprocal with that of his good wife; and he ever afterwards gave to the messengers of peace and salvation, a hearty welcome to all the accommodation his house and his hand could afford them. And the place of his abode, was emphatically, to christian strangers, The Pilgrim's Inn.

His residence at this time was in Swinegate, in a house which is yet standing opposite the entrance of Vine-street. The preaching was soon removed to this house from the former place, and where it was continued for several years. During the residence of Mr. Derry in this part of the town, and in subsequent situations occupied by this excellent man, much annoyance and opposition, from a wicked rabble, had to be withstood. And so strong was the tide of prejudice against him, purely on account of his religion, that the influential part of the inhabitants confederated to refuse letting him a house in which to live; and he actually became sub-tenant to a stranger lady, Mrs. Fisher, who took a house in Watergate, principally for his accommodation; and also that the intention of his enemies might be frustrated, in driving, with Mr. Derry, the gospel from the place.

Of the circumstances connected with the earliest period of methodism in the town of Grantham, James Moss possesses a more distinct recollection than any other person with whom the writer has conversed. He is a member of society, and now resides in the place,—an old man, tottering on the verge of the grave, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. He was born at Sleaford, but removed to

Grantham with his parents when but three years old. Whilst a boy, prior to his teens, he was employed to assist the ostlers at the George Inn, in the care of the horses. The example set before youth in an inn yard, is such as is seldom favourable to morals. From the impious practice of profane swearing indulged by the associates of James, he soon became an adept in the same unhappy art. But in a somewhat remarkable manner, he was all at once induced to break off the habit. There was one of the ostlers addicted to utter imprecations more horrid than the rest. Concerning this man, as James was asleep one day under a manger in the stable, he dreamed that he saw him tormented in hell; and that it was in consequence of the oaths and curses which had polluted his lips, and which had impregnated his character with properties that were diabolical and infernal. He awoke under very alarming apprehensions for his own safety, and resolved to avoid in future a practice fraught with so much peril. He recollected at the moment, that he had heard it stated, that when any one is in trouble of mind, and prays to God, believing in his heart, the help for which he prays will be afforded him, and God will pardon all his sins. He immediately fell upon his knees, and besought the Lord most earnestly to extend mercy to his soul and forgive his iniquity. He arose with his mind comforted, and walked afterwards in the path of circumspection, having the fear of God before his eyes. At the age of fourteen, which was in the year 1770, he was bound an apprentice to Mr. Derry, who followed the trade of a boot and shoe maker. He attended with his master to hear preaching in Sand-pit Lane, and was seriously disposed.

The testimony of James is given to many scenes of persecution through which the Methodists passed during the seven years of his apprenticeship. On one occasion whilst standing by his master, listening to a sermon out of doors, a mob came forth and commenced an attack upon the preacher and his adherents, by casting at them rotten eggs, dirt, and stones, when the appearance and visage of some of them soon became so metamorphosed, that it was difficult to distinguish either their countenance or the colour and quality of their apparel, they were so bespattered with this filthy evidence of antipathy to religion and its ways. In this fray, an egg came in violent contact with the teeth of Mr. Derry, and on breaking filled his mouth with its contents. This circumstance may create a smile, and to those who were engaged in the offensive warfare, delightful sport, no doubt, was afforded; for "fools make a mock at sin;" but to the master of James it was no joke. And afterwards, when the means were removed to the house of Mr. Derry, in Swinegate, the room would frequently be filled with dust and dirt, scraped together in the streets, and brought in barrows and baskets, and thrown in amongst the congregation whilst assembled in the worship of God. At other times, buckets full of water would be poured in till the house was completely flooded. In this way it was, and in some instances more violently, that the poor Methodists, for a number of years, at different intervals, were insulted and abused. It is not possible fully to depict the outrages which were committed upon them.

The enmity which was indulged towards Mr. Derry, and the opportunities which were taken by many to vent their spleen against the Methodists,

the following example may show. A butcher of the name of Long, who lived opposite Mr. Derry's, on seeing the horse of the Rev. Mr. Pugh, hanging at his door, having on a new saddle, gave a boy a penny, to carry a bucket of bullock's blood and pour it upon the saddle. The reverend gentleman went over to remonstrate with the man; but from whom he could obtain no apology, with the exception of abuse and a multitude of curses. As the butcher displayed so much of lawless violence and awful profanity, Mr. Pugh thought it his duty to make an example of him, and therefore had recourse to the magistrates to inflict the penalty of the law upon him for profane swearing. This circumstance raised a most furious persecution; and perhaps the judgment of Almighty God has seldom been more conspicuously exemplified than it was on this occasion, in the deaths of four men who rendered themselves most notorious in abetting opposition to the methodists. Their names are known, but their awful end forbids the recital of them. One of them was so filled with anguish of spirit, that he could find no rest. It was impossible to keep him in bed, when brought so low that he could not get abroad; but would creep beneath it, and roll himself about in all positions. At last he crept into a sand-hole, beneath the stairs, where he was found with his body rolled together, having his head betwixt his feet, quite dead.—Another when upon his death-bed, to which he was brought prematurely, indulging in a humour which was infernal, gave directions for two windows to be fixed in his coffin, one at the head and the other at the foot, that he might see the devil when he came to fetch him, as he felt assured he would. But he should like to

give him a chase, by creeping out at one window as the devil came in at the other. As men live, for the most part, so they die. How awful to deal in levity with death and eternal things.—A third went out and hanged himself.—The fourth was resolved to drink himself to death. To accomplish his purpose, he took a quantity of liquor with him into the field, where he soon effected his design. “The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.” The deaths of these individuals took place very near together, which circumstance gave to the visitation of God in the manner of their end, a greater prominence, and which affected the minds of many for awhile with solemn awe.

James Moss retains a distinct recollection of Messrs. Glastone and Carlow, as being the first of Lady Huntingdon’s students, from the College of Trévecca, that visited Grantham. Having preached in the town on Sunday morning, they used to proceed thence to Hough-on-the-Hill, whither James would frequently accompany them, for the purpose of hearing them preach again on the after part of the day. He remembers also Messrs. Peacock, Mowat, and Boone, and of their preaching in Grantham. This must have been about 1771, the year in which their names stand upon the stations for Lincolnshire West; which circumstance affords a data for the introduction of Methodism into this town.

About the commencement of James Moss’s apprenticeship, Mr. Derry became afflicted with a protuberance on the back of his neck, which assumed in a few years the appearance of an enormous wen, hanging down betwixt his shoulders to the middle part of his back. It had been named to Mr. Derry, by one of the Calvinist ministers, that there



was a preacher, of the name of Costerdine, in Mr. Wesley's connexion, that was famous for removing wens, and similar excrescences from the human body; and that from what he had heard of his skill, he had little doubt, if application were made to him, of his ability to remove it. It so happened, that Mr. Costerdine was appointed to the Nottingham circuit the next year. When he arrived at Muston, on going round his circuit, he rode over to Grantham, and examined the wen, but from its extraordinary size and appearance, he manifested considerable reluctance to apply his remedies. However, he made the attempt, and in about twelve months the substance was completely wasted away. In the process of cure, the almost incessant pain he experienced, was excruciating. And it appears, that whilst the wen itself was removed, from some neglect of proper medicinal treatment, a disease, which settled into a confirmed asthma, of a very afflictive nature, was the consequence. For the space of thirty years, he was incapable, from this distressing complaint, of lying down in bed. He was wont to sleep, during this protracted period, in a sitting posture, in an easy chair. But although many wearisome days and restless nights were allotted him, patience was allowed to have its perfect work. He would utter,—and the Almighty to whom his utterance was directed, heard him in that he desired,—

“When pain o'er my weak flesh prevails,  
With lamb-like patience arm my breast;  
When grief my wounded soul assails,  
In lowly meekness may I rest.”

The character of Mr. Derry was distinguished by uprightness and integrity in all his worldly trans-

actions, and by simplicity and sincerity in his religious profession. And notwithstanding the persecution through which he passed, it was a singular circumstance, that he secured a larger share of the custom of the more respectable families in the town and neighbourhood, than any other person of the same trade in Grantham. The public religious services which were carried on in his own house, were frequently conducted, in the interval of the preachers' visits, by himself; when he would read and expound, in a profitable manner, a chapter or portion of the scriptures. He was very solicitous that the 'spiritual interests of the inhabitants' of the place in which he resided should not be overlooked: and whilst he possessed the ability of but one talent, in his own estimation, when compared with others, whose gifts might exceed his to three or four times the extent for usefulness; he, nevertheless, felt it his duty to occupy his talent, rather than allow it to lie dormant, and see his ignorant and enquiring neighbours altogether deprived of the means of admonition, and of knowing what they must do in order to be saved. His love to souls, and the Holy Spirit's influence, constrained him to stand up and exhort sinners to "flee from the wrath to come," and to direct the penitent to "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Edification was a consequence of this display of zeal on the part of Mr. Derry; and by whose labour of love, the little society was kept together, and the congregation from being entirely scattered.

After having weathered many a storm, this good man, by his heavenly Pilot's skill, to whose management he carefully submitted himself, entered the har-

hour of eternal rest, in safety, peace, and triumph, on the 18th of December, 1801, in the seventy-second year of his age.

On Mr. Derry removing from Swinegate, he came to reside in Watergate, where he lived as sub-tenant to Mrs. Fisher, on the premises now occupied by Mr. Richard Brown. It was in the yard or paddock behind these premises, and whilst Mr. Derry was a resident there, that Mr. Wesley preached to a large concourse of people, in the year 1781. He resided, at the time of his death, in the adjoining house below, which at present is occupied by Mrs. W. Clegg.

There are now residing in Grantham, a son and daughter of Mr. Derry, considerably advanced in life, and likewise an orphan granddaughter, Miss Mary Derry. Mr. Francis Derry also is the son of this primitive methodist, and who has been employed in the work of an itinerant preacher in the Wesleyan Connexion for the last thirty-three years.

On James Moss completing the time of his servitude with Mr. Derry, he removed to Nottingham, where he joined the society. He was absent from Grantham after this, for upwards of fifty years; consequently his acquaintance with methodism in the town and neighbourhood, extends no farther than the year 1777. It is to be regretted that Mr. Roe should have been allowed by the members of his own family, and his more intimate religious friends, to have dropped into the grave without obtaining from his own lips, such particulars as were connected with the introduction and first stages of methodism in these parts; which, from his early and intimate acquaintance with the circumstances, had it been done, might have afforded opportunity for more

general developement, and enabled the writer to accomplish the work he has undertaken with greater exactness. He has, however, spared no pains to render it as complete as he possibly could; and he has the satisfaction of assuring the reader, that the limited subjects introduced, are derived from that source of evidence which may be pretty confidently relied on.

The Methodist ministry was first introduced into Muston, in the year 1775. Mr. John Willshaw was the preacher, who then travelled in the Derbyshire circuit. He came over from Nottingham, to break up the fallow ground and sow the seed of the gospel in this village, at the invitation of John Pickering, who occupied a small cottage in the parish. By reading Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, the conscience of John had been awakened to a sense of sin; hence, the salvation of his soul had become an object of paramount importance, and to secure which, he was accustomed to wander alone on the Sabbath from church to church, and from one place of worship to another, in diligent search of "the pearl of great price." In this commendable undertaking his steps conducted him to the church at Freeby and Melton, where he heard words of comfort and encouragement, from the celebrated Rev. Dr. Ford, who had recently commenced his ministry and career of usefulness in those parishes. John was on very intimate terms with the Doctor after he first heard him preach, and for a number of years would frequently walk over to the parish churches in which he exercised his ministry, to hear from his lips the word of life and salvation. And several persons in Muston, who, soon after the conversion

of John Pickering, became acquainted with the things of God by hearing the occasional preaching of the Methodists, would also walk over to Freeby for the benefit of the Doctor's ministry, although a distance of twelve or fourteen miles. Mrs. Dawn, who died a few years ago, used to speak of walking this extensive journey, and returning immediately after the service was over; and of carrying, at the same time, an infant child in her arms. When she found herself fatigued with the position of her load, she would suspend the child in her apron around her waist. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days."

About the time John Pickering first resorted to the churches in the neighbourhood of Melton, he used to extend his walks as far as Nottingham also. Here it was that he became acquainted with the Methodists, and such was his thirst for the means of grace amongst them, that to be in time for the seven o'clock prayer meeting, he has been entering the town, by the Trent bridge, when the chimes have been playing the hour of six. This he would do in the depth of winter, as well as in the more favourable seasons of the year. The distance is eighteen miles, so that he must have been stirring pretty early in the morning. After the prayer meeting he would attend the class, then the preaching in the forenoon, and on his way home would hear the sermon at Ratcliffe in the afternoon. On hearing a preacher one Sunday in the morning at Nottingham, and in the afternoon at Ratcliffe, very much to his satisfaction and profit, he resolved to return with him to Nottingham to hear him again in the evening. After which he proceeded for Muston, where he arrived about midnight; making a

journey entirely on foot, of near fifty miles. In these excursions he was quite a pedestrian ; from which it might be supposed that he was a strong athletic man ; but he was rather the contrary, being somewhat slender in his make, and of a delicate constitution. An ardent desire for spiritual food, was the incentive to these extraordinary exertions, and not any natural predilection to ostentatiously put forth his strength. And no doubt, the profit which he found in listening to the truths of the gospel and to the experience of God's people, and in joining with them in prayer, so exhilarated his mind, that his body became invigorated also. A degree of literal application may be given in some cases, to the spiritual meaning of the prophetic announcement ; "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The desire is not uncommon to those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift," that others should participate with them in the same enjoyment. And such was the happiness derived from the change, which the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, had produced in the mind of John Pickering, that he was persuaded,

"If all the world his Saviour knew,  
All the world would love him too."

And that his neighbours might be favoured with the means which had been made so great a blessing to his own soul, on his first acquaintance with the Methodists at Nottingham, he felt a strong propensity to get the preachers to visit Muston. But before he ventured on a step so important, he went

over to Melton to consult with his friend Doctor Ford. Instead of manifesting any thing like contempt for the new associates in religion, to whom John was attaching himself, or appearing indifferent to his solicitude, the Doctor replied, "I would advise you, John, to be careful that you do not neglect the performance of a duty which you may conceive would disturb your conscience upon a death-bed." This indirect reply was perfectly satisfactory to John that the sentiments of his adviser were in favour of an invitation being given to the Methodist preachers to sound the gospel in the village of Muston. Mr. Willshaw soon made his appearance, and opened his commission in the house of John Pickering, where, in conjunction with that of Mr. Goodacre, preaching was continued for a number of years.

But things did not progress so very smoothly at the commencement. As in other places, so in Muston, the carnal mind soon began to display its enmity towards God, by many who were under its influence, in opposing to John the hand of persecution. The windows of his cottage were frequently broken. On one of Mr. Willshaw's visits, being disposed to make him appear ludicrous when mounted on horse-back, they took and metamorphosed his horse, by cutting all the hair off its tail and mane. The vicar made himself a partisan with the rabble. One Thomas Marshall, of Bottesford, was quite desperate in his attacks upon the people who assembled in the house for the purpose of getting good to their souls. He was notorious also in destructive acts of wickedness, in breaking the windows, and in demolishing the fences and produce of the garden; and in abetting others to imitate his example. Some of the inhabitants who had no objections for a few

harmless pranks to be played off upon the Methodists, thought that this man was too impetuous in his hostility, and that he carried matters a great deal too far. They could not reconcile themselves to believe that "the new religion," as they called it, which John was introducing to the village, merited so much injury and ill will, in which this characteristic son of a Jezebel was indulging; they therefore siezed upon him and fastened him in the stocks. The vicar, however, who seemed to possess more sympathy for the man, than for John and the Methodists; and more veneration for *his* cause, than for the "new religion," had him speedily liberated from his confinement. The enmity of the more violent opposing party, ran so high at one time, that they formed the determination of pulling down the house, which was to take place on a certain night according to arrangement. Knowing the desperate character of the men, the mind of John became somewhat disconcerted. He had recourse to God in prayer; and on opening his bible to read a portion of its contents, his eye was directed to this passage, "The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand." The words were remarkably appropriate to the trial with which his mind was exercised. He was enabled to lay hold of the promise. His fears were at once dissipated. He believed God would preserve him and his habitation; and his faith did not fail him. The house is yet standing, and is occupied by his daughter, Mary Johnston, now in the sixty-fifth year of her age, a woman of a tenacious memory, and who seems to possess a very distinct recollection of past occurrences, with which by any means she has been made acquainted, even from her childhood.



The vicar had candour enough to acknowledge that John Piëkering was an honest and industrious man; only that he was "a fool sometimes:" which designation he politely applied to his choice of religion. When the Doctor found that methodism was not to be worsted in the village by the strength of opposition, and that John was determined upon holding his meetings, and perceiving also that the cause gained ground, he congratulated himself by saying to the people, "O! let him alone; the preachers will soon eat him up." Of course, as the shepherd had thus ventured to predict, the sheep of his care were led to expect the fulfilment of his prediction. After waiting for a length of time, and watching for his distress and the ruin of his circumstances; but perceiving that he got no worse, they grew sceptical in the announcement of their vicar, and were ready to discard him as a false prophet; and concluded amongst themselves that the preachers must certainly bring him something. When this was told to John, he remarked, 'Surely they do; they bring me 'Good tidings of great joy.''' He was very intrepid in the cause of God, and patient in the endurance of sufferings and wrongs. He possessed a particular aptness in giving answers to gainsayers. The curate, one fast-day, sent for him to his lodgings, to have some sport with him, in the way of intimidation. On entering his apartment, the curate said, "Well, John, and has Mr. Oliver given you a discharge of your close?" No, sir. "Well then, if he do not, neither intend it, were it in my power, I would." John replied, "And have you not been to church, sir, where you have prayed 'That it might please God to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to

turn their hearts' ? In this prayer, sir, I most heartily join." The weapons of the curate were turned upon himself. He was abashed and confounded ; and John was requested to retire, with the simple apology, "O ! I will talk to you another time." When upon his death-bed, being full of holy joy, he said, "I am neither afraid nor ashamed to die. I have walked many hundred miles to hear the gospel, but not one mile too many."

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,  
My beauty are, my glorious dress :  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Bold shall I stand in thy great day ;  
For who aught to my charge shall lay :  
Fully absolved through these I am,  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame."

He died June 7th, 1791, aged fifty. Ann, his wife died in the hope of a better world, December, 1804, in the seventy-fourth year of her age.—Amongst the first members of the Muston society, were John and Ann Pickering, and Martha Caunt, William and Ann Hoyes, William and Sarah Goodacre, John and Sarah Dawn, Robert Simon, and Thomas Hickman. All these have finished their pilgrimage and gone to their reward. At the death of John Pickering, the office of class-leader devolved upon Thomas Hickman.—It is not exactly in order of time, but to give a succinct account of the leaders of this society, it may be observed, that when the last named leader was called to join the hosts above, the care of the class was given to Robert Simon, the younger. It has since been divided into two bands, when John Johnson, grandson of John Pickering, was appointed to lead the new class:

As a list of the succession of preachers who have travelled in these parts might be desirable, by way of reference, the following is given, which is taken from the commencement of the Stations as they appear on the printed Minutes of Conference, down to the time narrated in the foregoing particulars.

- 1765. *Epworth*, Thomas Lee, Thomas Brisco, J. Longbotham.
- 1766. *Lincolnshire West*, T. Rankin, W. Brammah, L. Harrison.
- 1767. ———— T. Rankin, J. Ellis, J. Peacock.
- 1768. ———— Isaac Brown, J. Shaw, T. Carlill.
- 1769. ———— Isaac Brown, J. Ellis, Joseph Garnet.
- 1770. ———— John Ellis, J. W., William Ellis.
- 1771. ———— John Peacock, G. Mowat, C. Boone.
- 1772. ———— I. Brown, J. Peacock, R. Empringham.
- 1773. ———— J. Robertshaw, D. Evans, J. Robinson.
- 1774. ———— S. Woodcock, J. Brettel, T. Corbet.
- 1775. *Derbyshire*, I. Brown, E. Slater, J. Peacock, J. Willshaw.
- 1775. ———— S. Woodcock, R. Howard, J. Crook.

## CHAPTER VI.

GREAT GONERBY,—GRANTHAM,—MUSTON,—SKILLINGTON;—WHILST CONNECTED WITH GAINSBOROUGH.

At the Conference of 1776, Gainsborough was placed at the head of a circuit, to which Great Gonerby and Grantham were attached. Muston continued on the other side, and belonged to Nottingham, which was made a circuit town at the same time with Gainsborough. But in a few years afterwards, and not later than 1781, it is found connected with Grantham in the Gainsborough circuit. No documents, however, are to be found in the circuit accounts of either Gainsborough or Nottingham, to determine the precise year in which Muston was transferred from the latter to the former circuit. Nor, indeed, are the names of any of the places, now in the Grantham circuit, to be found on the records of any of the circuits to which they formerly belonged, until they stood connected with Newark, in the year 1794. Notwithstanding this loss of documentary evidence, there are circumstances in the recollection of Mrs. Johnston which identify Muston as being in the Nottingham circuit for some time previously to 1781. She distinctly recollects Messrs. Costerdine and Swan preaching several times in her father's house. They were stationed at Nottingham the first year it was made a circuit. In 1778, when she was in the ninth year

of her age, the small pox was very prevalent in the village, with which disease she was also afflicted. Messrs. Collins, Bardsley, and Percival were then in the circuit. On Mr. Bardsley's next visit to Muston, after the epidemic had broken out, and hearing of the circumstance on his entering the parish, he was intimidated and refused to alight, and so rode on to his next day's appointment. Mr. Percival, who succeeded Mr. Bardsley the fortnight afterwards, is recollected by Mary Johnston to have said, remarking on the cowardice of his colleague, "I would have remained to preach had the plague been here." This incident is named as an evidence that the Nottingham preachers visited Muston.

In a letter received from Mr. Philip Hardcastle, some farther light may be cast upon the state of methodism, about this time, in this part of the country. Mr. Hardcastle's testimony is valuable. He is now a supernumerary preacher, having attained to upwards of eighty years of age. The period to which his communications relate, is the interval of August 1781 and August 1782, when he travelled in the Gainsborough circuit. It does not appear that he has had any intercourse either with the persons or places named in his letter, since he left this side of the circuit. The particulars he names, afford a fine specimen of a retentive memory in an old man, looking back across a space of fifty-four years, and plucking out a few appropriate occurrences from a multitude of others, by which, in a life like his, they must have been surrounded. With these introductory remarks, no farther apology it is deemed, will be thought necessary, for the insertion of the letter. It is addressed to the writer of this work.

“ Stokesly, May 25, 1835.

“ DEAR BROTHER,

“ Your's of the 19th, I duly received ; and am very sorry that it is not in my power to give you much information relative to your circuit. When I was in it, we preached once a fortnight at Gonerby, at the house of Thomas Emery, as I remember,—not Emley : he was blind. How long preaching had been there, I cannot inform you. We attended Grantham in like manner, at the house of Mr. Derry. The introduction of methodism into Grantham, was with much opposition ; and the meetings were greatly disturbed, till Mr. Derry complained to a magistrate, who espoused his cause, and committed, I think, four of the mob to prison, where they lodged for the night, which gave them a cooling, and was of use to them in future. The magistrate also told Mr. Derry, ‘that if the mob did continue to disturb the meetings, if he would inform him, he would fill the jail with them, or he would make them quiet.’ This did the business, and we had no disturbance afterwards.

“ We regularly attended Muston, and preached at the house of a Mr. Goodacre, who was a farmer and butcher. We had a small society there. We also had a small society at Bottesford, near Belvoir Castle. I have forgotten the name of our host. I think we went thence to Muston.

“ Once when I was at Grantham, a person of the name of Mary Kerry, came to desire me to go to Normanton, which I think lies a few miles east from Grantham. She told me they had had preaching there for some time previously, but that it was discontinued. And that the Calvinists had visited them ; but they had also left them. I went soon

after, and met with a hearty welcome, and a house filled with people, who seemed to hear with serious attention. After preaching I formed a small society, who rejoiced to hear the Methodist doctrines preached to them once more. One man told me, Calvinism starved his soul, and that it was long since he had heard a sermon which afforded him such comfort, as the one to which he had then been listening. He wept for joy. We continued going once a fortnight, and I think the cause was likely to prosper; but the good woman of the house removed to Nottingham, and I never knew how they succeeded after I left the circuit. A memoir of Mrs. Kerry is to be found in the Methodist Magazine, for the year 1814, page 188. I do not remember Croxton. I once preached in the kitchen of the Rev. W. Dodwell, and never any more. But I see you have got Welby on your plan.

"I think I have not any thing of importance to communicate: my memory is not what it was. Please to remember me affectionately to Mr. Simpson, and wishing him every needful blessing for both worlds,

"I remain his and your affectionate brother,

"PHILIP HARDCASTLE."

There is no preacher now living, that travelled either in the Nottingham or Gainsborough circuit, previously to Mr. Hardcastle, when stationed upon the latter, in 1781. And there is no person in the Grantham circuit, who was a member of society at the time which is here stated: nor are the labours of this venerable minister recollected, whilst he continued to preach in these parts, by any who are now living in Grantham or the neighbourhood. He

is therefore both the oldest preacher and Methodist, now alive, that can claim any connexion, in those relationships, with this circuit.

It would seem, however, that Mrs. Wilson, the mother of Mrs. Catherine Hardy, together with her husband, joined the society near to this time. She is yet alive, and is reputed to be upwards of ninety years of age. Considering the period to which her life has been protracted, she is quite a prodigy for strength. She is capable of walking a considerable distance, and is found regularly in attendance on the means of grace, and in possession both of eyesight and hearing. But her memory fails her as to names and dates. Mr. Wilson first heard the Methodists at the house of Mr. Derry, in Swinegate, when his mind became deeply impressed with the importance of salvation. For some time he carefully concealed from his wife the concern which he felt for the welfare of his soul. He had recourse to a little stratagem, to induce her to the meeting, where he had repeatedly been himself, but unknown to her. He invited her to a walk one Sunday evening, and contrived to pass the house at the commencement of the service, when the people were singing. He halted, as though a little surprised at what they were doing; and then proposed to his wife that they should enter, and hear what was to be said. The conductor of the service, at that time, was a female; who, after she had prayed, sat down, and read a chapter, certain parts of which she expounded, and then applied her comments on the text in a very pointed and impressive manner. On walking home, Mr. Wilson asked her how she liked the discourse? Her heart was full, but she endeavoured to restrain her feelings, whilst she



simply replied to his enquiry, How could any one help but like it. She was forward to attend after this, of her own accord. Both of them were of one mind; and uniting with the people of God, among whom, for righteousness' sake, they willingly suffered persecution; and of which they met with a considerable share.

Connected with this period of the world's æra, and of methodism in Grantham, it would not be right to pass by the name of a female, who joined the ranks of the society, and shared with the few individuals that composed it, in the obloquy, shame, and reproach, which in those times of intolerance, were cast upon them. This was the mother of Mr. William Houghton. Previously to the time she heard the Methodists, she might be denominated a bigoted Church woman; for she prided herself in her constant attendance at the parish sanctuary, on the Sabbath, on sacramental occasions, and on all saint days. The righteousness of which she made her boast, was that of the law. Strictly speaking, she was a consistent pharisee. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness," even "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," she attended the routine of external ceremonies, vainly supposing to establish her own. And it appears she had no spiritual guide to point out to her the fallacy of the attempt. Nevertheless her aim was to serve God according to the light she had: and he, who is merciful to all, directed her steps, in the end, to those means of information, whence she derived the knowledge of sin, and also the way of deliverance from it. Whilst Mrs. Houghton lived in a state of distance from actual salvation, and in wedded attachment to the

formularies of her church, she was decidedly opposed to a spirit of persecution, and indulged in a charity towards others which was highly commendable, and which sentiments she was careful to inculcate upon her children. This was shewn in the advice she used to give to her two sons, William and Isaac ; and also in the parental restraint which she exercised over them. When a rabble was accustomed to assemble about Mr. Derry's house, at the time the meetings were held in an evening, and in various ways disturb the congregation, she would caution her boys, and tell them they must never go amongst the mob : that those who composed it were wicked men and lads : that God would be angry with them if they were to join with such a rabble, and act as they did : that the persons they were disturbing, were good people, as they met for the purposes of prayer and the worshipping of God, and therefore they should be let alone. In this way she would talk to them ; and was anxious to keep them in the house at night, lest they should be led astray by other boys, and induced to join in the disturbance of the Methodists, which was the diversion of the low-lived and ignorant populace. For although a certain justice of the peace had, at one time, according to Mr. Hardcastle's statement, suppressed these proceedings ; yet that magistrate did not bear rule or exist always. And others who were called in succession to sustain the same authority, have been known to be of a contrary disposition to him, and less careful of fidelity ; so that whilst the law which prescribed their prerogatives, prohibited them abetting persecution, yet their inclination to do so, was apparent in their non-interference when the rights of conscience were invaded.

As soon as opportunity of this kind was presented, in magisterial restraint being taken away, the sports of the aliens of righteousness were soon resumed.

The traces of providential guidance never appear in any thing more legibly than in the means which bring many persons to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus. There may be various circumstances, in some cases of conversion, remarkably simple in themselves, but when viewed in connexion with the choicest of all blessings up to which they lead; "the finger of God," which claims acknowledgment, cannot but be perceived. Mrs. Houghton's introduction to the preaching of the Methodists, and her conversion to God, were by a chain of apparently trivial occurrences. She had gone up the hill to Gonerby at the time of the feast, and probably to pay a visit of festivity to some friend or relation. Towards evening, a neighbour with whom she had agreed to return home, had occasion to call at Thomas Emery's. She requested Mrs. Houghton to accompany her. She did so. On their arrival, a degree of kind attention was shewn them; and in conversation it was stated to be the night for preaching; and as it was held in the room where they were then sitting, and the time having nearly arrived, when the service would commence, they were invited to remain. Mrs. Houghton felt no inclination to do so; but she was at a loss to frame an excuse. Rather, therefore, than incur the censure of being uncourteous, she thought she would reconcile herself for once to hear a Methodist sermon. The discourse was on the care of Martha and the choice of Mary. The name of the preacher is not recollected; but the influence on Mrs. Houghton's mind was so far effectual, as to lead her to seek salvation.

She saw herself in a light she had never seen herself before. The fig-leaf garment of her own righteousness was torn in pieces; and she found herself completely destitute of the "one thing needful," to prepare her to stand accepted in the presence of a heart searching and holy God. She resolved to imitate the example of Mary who had "chosen that good part," which her divine Redeemer declared should "not be taken away from her." Her determination was kept, and she was afterwards glad to embrace all occasions to hear the Methodists. No person was more regular than Mrs. Houghton in attendance on the means of grace, whether public or private. There was a degree of tartness in her natural temper; which rendered her Christian character, in the estimation of some, less amiable. But it often originated more in her manner, than in a sinful propensity. She was a good woman, and one who knew the truth, and whom the truth had made free,—by which she rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. Her testimony was, "I am a sinner saved by grace." She died at the advanced age of eighty-four, on the seventh day of February, in the year 1814.

The mention of Mrs. Houghton being at Gonerby feast, when she received the first impressions of good to her soul, may demand a passing remark. Country wakes or feasts may be denounced a great evil. They are a cause of much extravagance and wickedness. And for religious persons to keep up the practice, by inviting of friends and making provision for the occasion; or to patronise feasts by their attendance, is to be accessory to all the bad effects which are consequent upon them. The spiritual good which may have been occasionally promo-

ted at such seasons, is no argument to justify the countenance which some are disposed to give to village wakes. There is an acknowledged wisdom and power in God, whereby he can restrain and overrule evil, so as to make it subserve the interests of good; and such is the exuberance of his mercy towards man, that this ability is often made manifest. But who has hardihood sufficient to say, "Let us do evil, that good may come?" A race-course and a Sunday tea-garden, are places of amusement, and where at times a concourse of persons is attracted. A preacher of the gospel has been known to take his stand near to these scenes of folly and dissipation, because of the opportunity afforded him of announcing to a number of Sabbath-breakers, and "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," the word of life and salvation. Some were induced to listen to what this "babbler" had to say. The consequence was, that a few were awakened and converted from the error of their way. But will any, from this circumstance, contend that either public Sunday tea-gardens, or horse-races, merit the advocacy of religious people, and that they may be countenanced with safety by their attendance? The guidance of scripture and reason should be followed, and not the passions of a depraved heart, nor the practices of "men who have their portion in this life."

Miss Ellen Gretton, if not a member of the society at its first formation, in Grantham, became one of the party shortly afterwards; this was certainly antecedently to either of the two preceding females. She was a young lady of very amiable manners. The respectable connexion in life from which she sprang, would favor the report, that

she had been well educated. Her father was a clergyman. He had married a second time, when his children by the former marriage were sent from home, as being more agreeable to the wishes of the step-mother. Ellen was placed in London to learn the millinery and dress-making business. Whilst Miss Stevens, of Grantham, was on a visit to town, from some acquaintance which she formed with Miss Gretton, she recommended Grantham to her notice as a place favourable to commence her profession, where a fashionable dress-maker would meet with much encouragement. From this representation she was induced to come down to Grantham. She first took lodgings at Mr. Beedham's, in High-street, and was introduced to several respectable ladies, whose employment she was encouraged to expect. Very soon, however, the aspect of her success in business materially changed. When it was discovered by her patrons in the circle of gay and fashionable life, that she had become tainted with methodism, they withdrew their countenance and support, and entirely forsook her. That she should degrade herself by such an association, her family connexions also were highly displeased. It is said, that her father allowed her an annuity of thirty pounds: but to intimidate her continuance amongst the Methodists, and to draw her attachment from them, he threatened her with the gradual reduction of five pounds a year until she complied with his wishes. But she remained constant. With her, the union she had formed with the Methodists was a matter of conscience. Neither smiles nor frowns had influence sufficient to drive or allure her from what she conceived to be her path of duty. Her stipend, was reduced in the end, to the last five

pounds, when she had not capitulated to her earthly parent's wishes, being in opposition, as she believed, to the mind of her heavenly Parent. At this time of her extremity, the Lord provided for all her temporal conveniences, in her marriage with a respectable and god-fearing man. After which, her own family, perceiving she was comfortably circumstanced without their aid, became affable, and reconciled to her profession of methodism.

It was probably about the year 1777, that Miss Gretton came to reside at Grantham. Soon after her arrival, by some means, she was induced to hear the Methodists, under whose ministry she was savingly converted to God. On her heart first becoming inclined towards the reception of the truth, and before any of the society had become acquainted with the purposes of her visits to their public services, she was much struck with the appearance of Mr. Derry, and felt herself strongly prepossessed in favour of his religious character. This led her to desire and watch for an opportunity to speak to him on the concern which she felt for the salvation of her soul. But being somewhat diffident, and as the subject of communication to her was one of novelty, she was at a loss how to bring it forward. After some perplexity, she devised the scheme of knocking off her shoe heel, and then calling to get it mended. The plan thus contrived was put into immediate execution. The elevated heel, by an act of violence, was lowered about an inch; and then walking to the shop of Mr. Derry, she proposed the healing of the breach, as a covert introduction of herself. Being seated, she pulled off her shoe, and continued waiting during its course of mending, which gave her opportunity to bring forward the

more specific business of her call. It scarcely need be stated that she met with all the encouragement and advice her state required. Immediately after this interview she joined the society: and on leaving her former lodgings, she became an inmate of the family of Mr. Derry, where she remained five or six years, which was during her stay at Grantham.

The particular circumstances of her conversion are not recollected; but from a statement of Mr. F. Derry, in a letter to the compiler of this account, he remembers to have heard her state, that when the town was illuminated for Rodney's victory over the French, and whilst the people were rejoicing for the conquest which one mortal had obtained over others, her soul was exulting in praise to her Redeemer, who had given her a glorious victory over her spiritual foes: and that such was the illumination she had within her own breast at that time, being filled with light and joy and love, that she found no disposition to behold the illumination of the town.

Such was Miss Gretton's love to souls, and such was the paucity of agents, at that time, for the religious instruction of the people, that she was pressed in spirit to expound the scriptures in public, and to exhort sinners to turn from the error of their way; and this she continued to do, from within a short time after her conversion to near the period of her death. And that the Lord approved of what she did in this way, may be inferred from the general acceptance with which her labours of love were met, and the extensive profit which was consequent upon her exertions. Mr. F. Derry states: "She was one of the holiest of women. I have known many very excellent females; but her equal, in all respects, I have never known. I am indebted,



under God, to her for my earliest and best religious feelings. She never delivered her public addresses standing; nor did she ever ascend the pulpit. She never spoke uncovered; but the utmost delicacy of female modesty was evident in the whole of her deportment."

Miss Ann Christian, afterwards Mrs. Berridge, was the first Methodist in Skillington; and was the means of introducing preaching into the village. This was in 1782, or the year following. The society here, ever since its commencement, has been one of the best and most influential in the circuit. A number of farmers, at an early period, was led to espouse the cause; among whom a steady attachment to the interests of methodism distinguished their character for a succession of years.

Miss Christian, previously to her becoming serious, was quite the belle of the village. Her person was tall; and she was admired as a young lady of fine figure. And it would seem she was not a little vain of this personal superiority over some others of her own age and sex, and which she used to set off to the best advantage in the adjustment of her attire, according to the fashion of the times, in the most tasteful manner. In addition to other means of display, a spirited horse was provided her, on which she used to ride single with admired agility. But whilst in the midst of gay pursuits, Miss Christian was unexpectedly brought to feel that the world's pleasures are but as a dream, when she was led at once to retire from them and to abandon them for ever. Her relinquishment of carnal vanities was made for the choice of religion and its ways;—the ways of which are pleasantness,

and its paths are those of peace. And her adorning became that of a young woman professing godlines,—“not with gold, or pearls, or costly array,” but in neat and “modest apparel.” This change originated in the death of her indulgent father, Mr. Thomas Christian, who departed this life on the eighth of March, 1781, in the fifty-first year of his age. The susceptibilities of her mind were powerfully wrought upon by the suddenness of this scarcely anticipated stroke. She acutely felt the transitoriness of earthly joys, and saw how vain it was to indulge in expectant hopes from sublunary things. It was a happy circumstance, that whilst the wound was still open, which had thus been inflicted, she paid a visit to her aunt, at Welby,—a Mrs. Watson, the sister of her father. On going to church, her mind being disposed to listen to religious counsel, a deep probing of the wound was given under a sermon by Mr. Dodwell, whose ministry at that time was extensively instructive and powerfully awakening. The spirit of keen conviction entered, and she writhed in agony of mind from a sense of sin and her lost estate. She was a true penitent, and sought the Lord very earnestly, with many tears, for reconciliation and the pardon of all her sins. This distress of mind continued for several weeks before it was succeeded by the comforts of the divine Spirit, which are consequent on faith in the atonement of the great Redeemer.

On her return to Skillington, she had none to sympathise with her, or to give her suitable advice. Her own family were ignorant of the nature and effects of “a wounded spirit,” and judged from the disregard which she showed towards her former manner of life, that she must certainly be going out

of her mind. And their apprehensions became so great in the end, that the doctor was privately sent for to observe her appearances, and to determine whether she was in a sane state of mind or not. On the Sunday preceding his call, she went to church, and whilst the clergyman was reading either the lessons for the day, or some part of the prayers, a promise of the scriptures was applied to her mind with peculiar influence, when she was enabled by faith to rely on the merits of a crucified Saviour for acceptance with God. The darkness and sorrow which before oppressed and encompassed her, were at once removed, and she found herself "light in the Lord;" and with her heart overflowing with gratitude, she sang the praises of her great Deliverer. Every thing that surrounded her in creation, she has frequently been heard to say, assumed an aspect both new and delightfully cheering. All things in nature seemed to combine with her in acclamations to God. She was now much better prepared for an interview with the doctor than she previously would have been. The day following he made his appearance, when he introduced himself as though it had been an accidental call. Having been seated awhile, he got up, and turning to the book-case, he asked Miss Christian what was her favourite reading? She replied, "The Bible, Sir." He began to suspect from this answer that there might be truth in the report that her head had become a little deranged, which, on his previous observation, from the placidity of her countenance and her look of intelligence, he hoped was merely conjectural, and that she was in her right mind. He began then to talk to her, and if not very gravely, yet with an air of medical authority; and

told her that the bible was the worst book she could possibly read, and that she must not peruse it on any consideration. And he would have her to get into cheerful company, and enjoy the recreations and amusements of life. As he found, however, there were no appearances of violence and outrage in her behaviour, he thought there might be no danger apprehended were he to leave her for the present without enjoining any further restrictions. So the matter ended. But Miss Christian had applied to another Physician, the benefit of whose remedies she was then most happily realising, so that the directions of this gentleman had no influence upon her whatever, and she went on her way rejoicing.

The Rev. Dr. Coke was the first Wesleyan preacher to announce the gospel of salvation at Skillington. He was introduced by Mr. Dodwell, with whom he was spending a few days. Miss Christian resided at this time with her elder brother, William; and who had not manifested towards his sister's piety, the warmest cordiality. Mr. Dodwell, however, it would seem, was on calling terms with the family; and as he was rector of Stoke, together with Welby, and the former of which villages being but two miles from Skillington, it afforded him an easy opportunity of making a visit when he could do so with prudence. And as Miss Christian acknowledged him as her spiritual father, a friendly or pastoral enquiry would frequently be induced. The introduction of preaching by the Methodists into the village, when it could be effected, had been a subject of conversation betwixt them. Mr. Christian had become more affable towards his sister, which led her to indulge a hope that he might be

prevailed upon to comply with her wishes, and entertain the preachers and allow them to announce the gospel of salvation to the neighbours beneath the roof of his own house.

When Mr. Dodwell accompanied Dr. Coke to Skillington, he introduced him to Mr. Christian as being formerly a clergyman of the establishment, and who had been, for zealously and faithfully preaching Christ crucified, driven from the church, but that now he was in connexion with Mr. Wesley. He expressed a wish also that he might be allowed to preach in his house, that the neighbours, together with himself and the company present, might be favoured with a discourse from so able and eminent a preacher. Mr. Christian very readily agreed to the proposition; when in the evening, the house being full of people, the Doctor announced to them, "Ye must be born again." The next morning, when the two ministers were about to depart,—in the absence of Miss Christian, as had been previously concerted, that her presence might not in any way bias the mind of her brother,—Dr. Coke asked Mr. Christian if he might be permitted to request the superintendent preacher of the Gainsborough circuit, whom he should see in a few days, to take Skillington in their round; and if allowed this, he might expect one of the preachers in a few weeks at the farthest? This was rather an astounding proposition. It was assented to, however, with but little hesitancy, to the great joy of his sister, who was listening, with anxious suspense, in an adjoining room, to the reply he would make. Mr. Christian, after this time, became well disposed towards religion, and joined heart and hand in the cause of God.

There has been a difficulty in ascertaining who was the preacher that first succeeded Dr. Coke, and also the interval of time before his arrival. And although the late Mrs. Berridge was occasionally in the habit of speaking to these circumstances in the hearing of several of the friends, there are none who can distinctly recollect the particulars. It would appear, however, from a letter of Miss Gretton, which will shortly be inserted, that Mr. Corbet was the preacher. He travelled at Gainsborough in the year 1782. But from what may be inferred from the statement of Miss Gretton, when taken in connexion with other circumstances, the appearance of Mr. Corbet at Skillington must have been two or three months after Dr. Coke, which is at variance with traditional report, which makes it sometime within the subsequent month. But this incident is of no material importance. The only difference it would make is, that it would place the regular commencement of preaching in the village a year earlier or later; that is, either at the latter end of 1782, or the beginning of 1783. Whoever the preacher was, that followed next to the Doctor, he took the same scripture for his text, "Ye must be born again;" which produced a little amazement amongst the people, and led them to suspect that the Methodist preachers had the strange method of always speaking from the same words. But on a third hearing they were relieved from this apprehension.

The marriage of Mr. Christian took place shortly after his cordial reception of methodism. According to the construction of some, there was a little of the marvellous connected with this hymenial transaction; but by others, and perhaps more properly, the affair would be classified amongst the interposi-

tions of the providence of God. On a certain Saturday, Mr. Christian proposed to himself the pleasure of going over to Welby the next day to hear a sermon from Mr. Dodwell, and in the evening of conveying back his sister, who had been spending a few days with her aunt. During the intervening night, whilst in the profoundest sleep, he was carried in a dream to Welby church, where a congregation was assembled. He had not been seated long in the venerable pile, before his attention was particularly arrested by the appearance of a young female, whom he had never seen before, and towards whom he felt himself peculiarly moved in affection, accompanied with an impression that she would become his wife. In the morning he arose, and shortly afterwards prosecuted his journey to Welby. On his arrival, he repaired to the church in the afternoon with the family of Mrs. Watson. Forgetting altogether the circumstances of the preceding night's dream, he had not been long in the church before his eye was arrested by the appearance of a young lady in the parsonage pew, whose person and attire exactly corresponded with those of the female who had been so vividly represented to him in his sleep. The whole scene was strikingly renewed; only in the former instance it was a dream and had passed away, whilst in the latter it was a reality. After the family had returned from the service of the church, some remarks were made in reference to the said young person, when Mr. Christian was somewhat relieved in his mind to learn that she was about to make one of the party at tea that afternoon; and as his sister had formed some acquaintance with her during the week she had been at Welby with her aunt,—the young lady also

being on a visit at Mr. Dodwell's,—an opportunity was therefore presented and eagerly embraced to invite her over to Skillington to spend a few days with Miss Christian. The intimacy thus formed was happily consummated, within the space of two or three months, in the matrimonial union of the two individuals. The female was the amiable and persecuted Ellen Gretton.

The conduct of Mr. Christian in this affair was to be admired. A sordid motive had no influence over him in the choice of a wife. Pure affection, and a desire to obtain a help-mate in the way to heaven, were obviously the ruling passion and his guide. Much animadversion might be made upon various circumstances which relate to this important transaction, but the limits of these pages forbid it. The health of Mrs. Christian was constitutionally delicate; but such was the intensity of her desire to do good, that she seemed to be propelled into exertions beyond what might be supposed her strength would endure. But when her flesh and her heart failed her, God was the strength of her heart and her portion for ever. For when brought to the verge of the grave, her prospects of glory were unclouded, and whilst in conflict with “the monster death,” she found herself “more than conqueror” over her “last enemy,” “through him who had loved her,” and by whose blood she was sanctified and made meet for heaven. She lived to be the wife of Mr. Christian ten years. She exchanged mortality for endless life, on the third day of June, 1793, aged thirty-six, leaving her affectionate husband behind to deplore her loss. She had several children, but none lived to survive her, save Ellen, who was cut down like a flower in its opening bud,



when she had attained to the age of fifteen, on the ninth of April, 1807, nearly fourteen years after her mother. But young as she was, she was neither afraid nor unprepared to die. "From a child she had known the holy scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

There are several individuals who distinctly recollect the person and character of Mrs. Christian, some of whom speak of having frequently observed her going out on a Sunday morning on horse-back, either single, or behind her husband or a trusty servant, wearing a red cloak, on her way to some adjacent village to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation. The testimony of those who knew her best, perfectly agrees with that of Mr. Derry, which has already been introduced. There was an unassumedness and modesty of manners about her, in the midst of all her zeal and public activity, which could not fail to remind those who listened to her addresses, marked as they were by faithfulness, that she had not forgotten the sex to which she belonged, nor the delicacy of her proceedings on that account. She was esteemed and venerated by all with whom she had any religious or social acquaintance.

It was intended that a memoir of this excellent woman should have been published. Had it been done, from the extensive diary which she left, an interesting and profitable volume might have been compiled. These papers with various documents were placed in the hands of a clergyman, who was considered to possess sufficient inclination and ability to execute the work. But from some cause or other it never appeared, and the manuscripts were not returned. All that remains of the productions

of her pen, are three or four letters which have been found amongst the papers of her husband since his decease. They contain the spontaneous effusions of her heart, hastily written, and evidently without any intention of being seen but by the individual to whom they were addressed. They cannot therefore be considered as a fair specimen of her abilities. But when the circumstances under which they were penned are taken into account, they develop the native simplicity of her mind, and the godly sincerity by which her proceedings in life were regulated. Having made this statement, perhaps the reader would not think it a waste of time to peruse a few extracts from them, or even the contents of the letters in their entire form. They were written in connexion with a subject which is generally esteemed one of great delicacy, being in answer to proposals of marriage tendered to her by Mr. Christian. Properly speaking, therefore, they are letters of courtship; which may excite the curiosity of some more strongly. But the language in which they are couched, is such, that they may be esteemed spiritual epistles, more than compilations sought out of the effervescence of human passions: and as such the diffidence of introducing them to the public eye is considerably obviated. Only one of them is fully dated. But they are inserted in the order in which it is supposed, they were written, and it is likely they would follow within a very short time of each other.

## LETTER I.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“As I feel myself much interested for the welfare of your soul, I hope you will excuse this

address, and not totally disregard a few words of advice, which I earnestly pray the Lord may bless for your good. Since our late conversation together, I have experienced many anxious hours on your account, fearing you do not sufficiently commit your way unto the Lord, but take the weight of all your cares on yourself. This the word of God expressly forbids; and advises thus: 'Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.' He is ever nigh unto those who call upon him; and though of ourselves we have no strength and power to combat with our spiritual enemies, yet in the strength, and by the help of our God, we may overcome every difficulty. 'He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' Be not discouraged, therefore, but ask for more grace, and it shall be given you. Satan, the great adversary of our souls, will endeavour to distress and perplex you, with raising up many *seeming* difficulties, which in *reality* are nothing but empty shadows. Yet if you give way to his suggestions, you will be easily persuaded they are mountains in your way, and impossible difficulties to overcome. But look and see, in the sacred volume, if ever any one trusted in the Lord and was confounded. Though many have suffered for the sake of religion, none ever lost their recompense for these sufferings. This I can testify by happy experience, having had every thing I lost for Christ, abundantly made up to me even in this present life, besides the blessed hope of eternal glory. But all are not called to suffer as I have done. The Lord deals in various ways with those who fear him. To some he gives great increase even of temporal comforts, and suffers not the wicked to hurt his people. Indeed, all who separate from

an evil world, must expect persecution in some shape or other. And this is a mark of being a disciple of Jesus. He hath said, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, &c. rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' Surely we ought to bear cheerfully, some part of that cross our Lord bore so long for us.

"I earnestly pray for you, that the God of all grace may strengthen you with great might by his Spirit in the inner man. Let me intreat you to be instant in prayer, and consider the salvation of your soul is of the utmost importance. Jesus has purchased it with his blood; and he alone can make you happy. If it please him to unite us, I trust it will be for his glory and our mutual good. Pray for me, and believe me, with sincerity,

"Your affectionate friend, &c.,

"ELLEN GRETTON."

#### LETTER II.

"Grantham, Jan. 22, 1783.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"I believe it will give you pleasure to be informed, the Lord has graciously restored me much since last Saturday. I am now tolerably well; and trust, if it be for his glory, I shall enjoy a better share of that invaluable blessing, health. For this we must pray with resignation to the will of God, who only can give or withhold. I hope to hear you are also better, and that the Lord carries on his work of grace in your soul more abundantly every day. I praise God for his goodness towards you hitherto, and doubt not but you will more and more experience, 'His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace;' for he is a gracious

prayer hearing God, and will in nowise cast out those that come unto him, humbly seeking his favour. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: such he will not despise. When Jesus was upon earth, how willing he was always to hear the complaints, and supply the wants, of his needy creatures: and such, especially, as mourned on account of their sins, and sought deliverance from them, he favoured with peculiar comforts, oft saying, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.' We may easily conceive, such a soul could not but rejoice. As pardon is welcome to the condemned criminal, in a temporal sense, how much more to the soul labouring under the displeasure of God, and by his law condemned to eternal death?—which is the case with every soul until they truly forsake their sins and believe in Jesus.

"But some say, Is this blessing to be obtained now Christ is in heaven? Yes, my friend, most certainly; for he is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' 'To this give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' When this blessing is obtained, then is the kingdom of God set up in their hearts, which is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost;—old things pass away, and all things become new;—the heart sensibly feels and knows the change;—Jesus becomes more precious, and they are enabled to renounce the world with all its vanities, and to conform to the commandments of their God.

"This, my dear friend, is the religion our Lord taught, and purchased with his blood, and without which we cannot possibly be happy. A form of godliness only, brings no peace to the guilty con-

science; but the life of God being communicated to the soul by his Spirit, delivers from darkness, fear, and anguish; and brings light and joy inexpressible: so that such an one can say, in the triumphant language of the prophet, 'O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou *wast* angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me,' &c. I do most earnestly pray that this may be the happy experience of my beloved friend; then will he know that peace which the world cannot give, nor take away; and be enabled to grow in grace daily to the glory of God.

"I this morning received my dear William's kind letter, for which I sincerely thank him; and praise the Lord for his great goodness to your precious soul, and trust your path will be as the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. How thankful shall I be to be made of the smallest use to you in spiritual things. Believe me, my heart most ardently desires your every happiness; and I doubt not the Lord has heard, and will still continue to answer, my prayers in your behalf. I trust also he will hear yours for me; and that if it please God to unite us, we shall be a mutual blessing to each other, in all things. So many circumstances concur, that I cannot doubt but our acquaintance is providential. In such a case, we may certainly expect the Lord's favourable approbation. Let us continue to pray that he will guide us with his eye, and preserve us from doing any thing contrary to his will. The following words have been much impressed on my mind since I last saw you: 'The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us.' (Psalm cxv. 12.) How encouraging the promise continues; when we consider he

never leaves nor forsakes them that trust in him. I have found him faithful to his word in every time of need; particularly when oppressed with sorrow, and encompassed with difficulties, how often has he cheered my drooping heart, and caused me to rejoice even in the midst of tribulation. Help me, ..... to praise him for his goodness, for I know no end thereof.

“I can truly say, I find an increasing affection for you, and trust we shall indeed taste the joys of angels together. Their joys consist in loving, praising, and serving the God of heaven: without ours, are the same, we cannot possibly be happy; but if they are, nothing can hinder our happiness. We may rest assured there is nothing that can afford real delight and substantial comfort separate from the love of God. But this divine principle implanted in the soul, is the source of present and eternal bliss: from this flows all the happiness we can enjoy in creature comforts. If we consider them as coming from God, we shall love them for his sake; but not place on them that affection which belongs to him alone. May *we* learn truly this lesson, and be made joint partakers of this love more abundantly day by day. Accept my earnest prayers, that the God of all grace would establish and strengthen your soul continually.

“Believe me, .....

“Your truly affectionate friend,

“ELLEN GRETTON.”

“P. S. Part of this letter was written before I received yours. If it please God, Mr. Corbet, will be with you on the day appointed,—to-morrow week, Thursday. Pray let as many know as possible. It is an honour to receive the Lord’s messen-

gers; and he will bless your soul; I trust, also, many others. Let us pray that a great blessing may accompany his word. O what a privilege you enjoy, to be able to serve in this way your blessed Master. Fear not the frowns of vain men; for Jesus approves, and will not fail to reward a willing mind. If God permit, I intend coming with Mr. Corbet. May the Lord bless our meeting. My kind love to your dear sisters. I will write, if I can, to both on Saturday. I have received a very kind letter from my brother, which I intend sending, if an opportunity offers, on that day. God bless you. Continue to pray for me."

## LETTER III.

"Grantham, January 25th.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"Before this, you have, I suppose, received a letter I wrote by the post on Wednesday, in answer to yours, which gave me great pleasure. I pray that the God of all grace may continue to bless you, more and more; daily enabling you to rejoice, and pursue the path of duty with delight. Though the way to heaven is through many difficulties, yet it is strewn with the choicest comforts. A child of God, however afflicted, has a rich storehouse of consolation, which the world knows nothing of. Whilst *they* are murmuring and repining, *he* is rejoicing in, and praising the God of all his mercies; knowing that *all* things, whether of an adverse or prosperous nature, work for his present and eternal good. With *his* joy, the stranger to divine things, intermeddled not; for the Lord is the portion of his soul, and filleth him with gladness, more than when *their* corn, and wine, and oil are increased.



“Go on, my dear friend, seeking with all your heart, the favour and friendship of God, who alone can make you truly blessed. He will give you the knowledge of his pardoning mercy, and prosper you in all your ways: when you are cast down, he will lift you up: when you are distressed, he will deliver you.

“I am truly thankful that you can, and I hope with *willingness*, receive the Lord’s messengers, for the good of your neighbours, as well as in consideration of your own profit. Be assured you will be no loser, for the Lord has said, ‘He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.’ By this it is evident, they who receive the ministers of Christ, shall have him for their portion, and he will by no means let them lose their reward. If they suffer persecution from the world, they shall enjoy his approbation, which will bear no comparison with the favour of men. Oh! may you, my beloved friend, have this token for good next Thursday. May Jesus bless you, and many others, by the preaching of his word,—making it a word of life and salvation. I hope, with God’s leave, to have the privilege of partaking this mercy with you. Blessed be his name, I continue much better. May we meet and rejoice together. Let me have a few lines by the post in a day or two. God bless, and preserve you from all evil. Continue to pray for me; and believe me,

“Most truly your affectionate

“ELLEN GRETTON.”

“P. S. The enclosed is the letter I mentioned in my last, from my brother. I hope it will give you some satisfaction. I have not heard from my father

yet. Though small is my portion of worldly riches, I trust, if it please God to make us one, he will enable me, in some measure, to make up that deficiency by affection. This is all I have to offer. 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.' May I not say this with propriety? and ask, Will that alone be acceptable?

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Christian after their marriage, whilst she was at some distance from home. It bespeaks the reciprocity of their affection, and is introduced both on that account and as being expressive, in her own language, of the intense desire she had to be useful to others in the exercise of the talent she possessed for public speaking.

## LETTER IV.

"Sleaford, Friday.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,

"As I believe it will give you pleasure to hear I am, through divine mercy, tolerably well, I send a few lines by the carrier. I wish I had desired you to write by his last return, as I feel very anxious to know how you do. Was I not somewhat persuaded it is the Lord's will I should continue here a little longer, my stay would be a great burden. Do pray that I may not be here in vain. The Lord has blessed me hitherto, and some souls seem to be thankful I am come. I have spoken two nights, and am to speak again to night, if it please God. May good be done, and I shall be truly thankful. I trust thy precious soul is refreshed from day to day. May it be filled with all the fullness of God.

"My dear Mrs. G. is in a most trying situation

indeed. None can judge what she goes through, but those who see her. Mr. G. is now gone to London, so that we shall, I hope, be freer from company; for though he behaved remarkably civil to me, yet we could not be so comfortable whilst he was here. I intend being at Welby next Thursday: so hope you will either come or send for me on Friday. The Lord grant me a safe return, and bless our meeting with his gracious presence. O, my dear, how good a God is our God. May we praise him, love him, and live to his glory continually. Pray give my duty to our dear mother, and kind love to sisters, brothers, Lydia, and all friends. The God of peace be with you all, and make all his goodness pass before you. Accept dear Mrs. G's kind love.

"I shall be exceeding happy if you have thought of writing by the carrier. I long to know how you do. What many fears and cares love produces. Into the everlasting arms of divine mercy, I commend thee, my dearest husband, earnestly praying that the Lord may bless you both in body and soul; and increase the health and strength of each of us, for our mutual comfort. Believe me, now and ever, my dear—dear love,

"Thy most affectionate Wife,

"E. CHRISTIAN."

The grace of God had gained such ascendancy over "infected nature" in the experience of this devout female, that her husband used to say, when adverting to her deep piety and exemplary profession of religion, that he never witnessed her indulging in any temper in which he should have feared to have met death. This was certainly saying much but not more than Mr. Christian believed in

his judgment and integrity was correct. And most assuredly not more than the scriptures promise to afford, or authorize the believer to expect.

“What never speak one evil word,  
Or rash, or idle, or unkind!  
O how shall I, most gracious Lord,  
This mark of true perfection find?”

“If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.” “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who knew no sin neither was guile found in his mouth.” “As he was so are we in this world.”

A testimonial of the character of Mrs. Christian, together with some religious occurrences which took place in these parts about this time, are given in the “Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Peard Dickenson.” The following is an extract. Mr. D. remarks:—“I now took leave of the people at Shoreham, who were much endeared to me, and having received a kind invitation from Daniel Agace, Esq., spent some time with him in London. While I continued with this gentleman I received a very friendly letter from the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Ratcliffe upon Trent, near Nottingham, intimating that he wished me to come and assist him in his parish. I spent two or three months with this gentleman and his family, in a very agreeable manner, and preached and officiated during the whole of the time. It was a season of continued mercies, and we had many times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in all the ordinances, both in public and private.

“Early in the following spring, 1786, the Rev. Mr. Dodwell, a pious clergyman in Lincolnshire, who often visited us at Ratcliffe, and with whom an intimacy soon took place, was desirous that I should come and reside with him, as he had the care of two large parishes, and through continued indisposition, was scarcely able to do any duty at all. After I had considered the matter, and consulted Mr. Davenport, as it appeared to be the will of Providence, I went over to Grantham, where I was met by Mr. Dodwell, and immediately proceeded to Welby, of which he was rector, a parish about four miles distant from Grantham, between which and Stoke, near Colsterworth, I was constantly engaged till it pleased God to remove me to London. My fixed residence was at Stoke, from whence as soon as I had finished the morning service, I instantly took horse, and reached Welby in sufficient time to go through the afternoon service. As people from the neighbouring parishes often attended at Stoke, I received invitations from several of them to come and preach among them, which I accepted from time to time, as my other engagements would permit. In the family in which I resided, we had morning prayer sufficiently early, not to interfere with the time when the labourers went into the field, during the advance of spring and summer. Many of whom continually attended, so that the house was nearly filled. I sometimes preached at a private house at Grantham, and still more frequently at Skillington, a neighbouring parish, within about a mile and a half of Stoke. Here I was much comforted amongst the pious, and simple-hearted people belonging to that society, and particularly with the excellent Mrs. Christian, and her family ;

one of the most devoted and sensible women with whom I ever conversed: a faithful follower of the crucified Jesus, whose spirit was taken to paradise a few years since by the Lord of glory."

Mr. Christian was a man of plain manners, and in his person tall and athletic, though not lusty. There was something of austerity in his look, and his voice was harshly sonorous. To a stranger at first interview, there would appear but little of the prepossessing qualities of character; but on a farther intercourse, the unfavourable impression wore off, and there were soon discovered a tenderness of feeling, a generous heart, and an unreserved frankness. His second wife was afflicted with considerable deafness, on account of which, Mr. Christian had contracted the habit of speaking loud, and had adopted the mode of laconically expressing himself in conversation. It is likely, therefore, that this manner of utterance, together with his natural roughness of voice, would operate unfavourably on the prejudices of strangers. But the writer of this sketch can bear testimony, that from several years occasional religious intercourse with this excellent man and his family, and with others who knew him well, he never either witnessed or heard of any thing in Mr. Christian contrary to the law of kindness. He was a man of prayer and faith, and uncompromising in his religious principles. He seemed to be well formed, both by nature and the grace of God, for the state of moral society which prevailed in the earlier period of his religious profession. The Methodists were then as speckled birds, and often treated with ribaldry and contempt. In the market at Grantham, and at the ordinary table, Mr. Christian had frequently to meet with scoffs and jeers,

but he was neither intimidated nor dismayed. His determination was fixed, and he continued steadfast and immoveable even to the last. Of the gospel of Jesus Christ he was not ashamed, for he had proved it to be the power of God unto his soul's salvation. He sustained for several years the office of class-leader, and occasionally that of circuit steward.

A prudent period having elapsed since the death of his wife Ellen, Mr. Christian married a second time, to Miss Esther Eminson, of Great Gonerby, and sister to Mrs. Ashbourn. She was of an amiable disposition, and the duties of a wife and a mother were fulfilled by her in a way which did credit to her character as a religious professor. Activity and industry were distinguishing marks in her course of life; but whilst she was diligent in business, she was not less distinguished for fervency of spirit, serving the Lord. She died in peace, September 4, 1821, aged sixty-two. The fruit of this marriage was three sons, William, Robert, and Thomas. They are respectable men, and are all members of the society, and are now respectively settled in life. Two of them are married, and have children. Their wives are excellent women, and combined with their husbands to seek the things which are above. All the houses of the brothers are open to the entertainment of the messengers of salvation, whether itinerant or local, as formerly was their father's.

The family of the Christians is rather celebrated for religious decision and attachment to methodism. The appellation of surname, by which they are distinguished from other families, is not disparaged by an indifference to sacred things; as they seem to be consistently determined to embrace the princi-

ples and imitate the practice of the individuals who, "first in Antioch were called Christians." Soon after Miss Christian was converted to God, she had the happiness to behold her two brothers and sister enter into the same gracious state. These, as the first generation, are gone to their reward. Their immediate descendants, the second generation, have all been brought, it is believed, to choose the Lord as their portion. May the third generation, now becoming a numerous progeny, be found imitators of their pious ancestry.

The two sisters, Misses Ann and Elizabeth Christian, were married on the same day: the former to Mr. T. Berridge, of Skillington; the latter to Mr. Edward Weaver, of Newark, a respectable draper. After a contracted space of various exercises, Mrs. Weaver exchanged her earthly sufferings for endless life, on the sixteenth of August, 1790, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. Her remains are deposited by the side of those of the Christian's family, in Skillington church-yard. A few particulars of the character and experience of Mrs. Berridge will be found in a future chapter of this work.

Mr. Robert Christian, the younger brother of Mrs. Berridge, was married about the same time his sisters were, to Miss Mary Balm, and to whose union some reference has already been made at page 149. It would, however, be a remissness to pass on without introducing any farther notice of this admirable female, as such she truly was, and whose praise was in all the churches. There was a combination of excellencies in her character, which renders it difficult to depict, and in the delineation of which to do adequate justice. Not that it is to be understood that her abilities were superlatively



brilliant and dazzling, and such as to intimidate and awe the humble, plain, and diffident believer, or to fill with wonder and amazement the professed discriminator of whatever is extraordinary and marvellous. Her qualifications were those of general usefulness; and so various in kind, both of nature and grace, and so combined, that she may be said to have been just such a woman as a religiously intelligent and respectable farmer might wish to choose for a wife. "The heart of her husband did safely trust in her:" and she did "him good and not evil all the days of" his "life." Solomon's description of a virtuous woman, was seldom, perhaps, both as to spirit and practice, more fully exemplified than in Mrs. Christian. In the commentary of Dr. A. Clarke, he makes some very pithy and appropriate remarks on the portraiture of the Jewish matron, which is given in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs, and more especially on that part of it which relates to the moral management of her family. Verse 26. "SHE OPENETH HER MOUTH WITH WISDOM:" the Doctor's comment is,—“1. She is *wise* and *intelligent*; she has not neglected the cultivation of her *mind*. 2. She is amiable in her carriage, full of good nature, well tempered, and conciliating in her manners and address.—‘IN HER TONGUE IS THE LAW OF KINDNESS.’ This is the most distinguishing excellence of this woman. There are very few of those who are called managing women who are not *lords* over their *husbands*, *tyrants* over their *servants*, and *insolent* among their *neighbours*. But this woman, with all her eminence and excellence, was of a *meek* and *quiet spirit*. Blessed woman!”

Nature had seemed to form the mind and constitution of Mrs. C. to be favourable to the social vir-

tues; and which, by the force of example and influence of education, had been extensively matured: but the produce of these merely natural and humanly cultivated virtues, whilst separate from religious principles, are found to be of no weight, when cast into the balances of the sanctuary; but on the mind being renewed by divine influence, when holy motives become the incentive of action, these social virtues assume the quality of christian graces. The Spirit's effusions impregnated all her moral powers, which enabled her to consecrate herself and all she had to the glory of God. She was of remarkably industrious habits;—a very early riser;—her household, which was extensive, was kept in great order and regularity;—and in her personal attire she was commendably neat and plain. She possessed a happy buoyancy of spirits; and in conversation she was cheerful and unreserved; and which was always either religiously instructive, or tending to some general profit. Her house was a principal resort for the preachers on their visits to the village, and on their passing through to other places, where they found from her heavenly minded disposition, and pious and intelligent observations, much to encourage them in the spiritual warfare and arduous toil in which they had embarked. For upwards of thirty years she was the assiduous leader of the female class at Skillington. The manner in which she instructed her children was exemplary; which was not by precept only, but by preceptive injunction combined with prayer and example. When she exercised correction upon them, she was guided by prudence and discretion, and not by feeling and mere caprice. And when punishment was to be inflicted, which had been merited by delinquency, it

was seldom executed at the time the offence was committed or discovered. The sentence first pronounced,—and which, like the law of the Medes and Persians,—was unalterable; and then, at a convenient opportunity, she would take the offending child alone with her into a private room, where she used first to pray with it, and then award the correction. On a certain occasion of transgression, for which, Thomas, when he was a little fellow, was called to pass through this disciplinary process, after his mother had very affectingly prayed with him, and having risen from their knees, he looked her very wishfully in the face, when he feign would have persuaded himself that the bitterness of flogging was past, and shrewdly, but with pitiful accents, addressed her,—“You will not flog me now, mother, will you?” Considering what are the feelings of a mother, it might be supposed that this was sufficient to have dissuaded her from her purpose. But she replied to this pathetic appeal of the little delinquent;—“My dear, I must punish sin: if I do not punish it in *you*, God will punish it both in *me* and you.” In this way she would reason with them, in order that they might distinguish why it was she used the rod; that it was not so much an expression of her own anger, or designed to produce in them a fear of her correction, as it was to impress their minds with the fear of God, and to give them a due sense of sin and its consequences. This mode of discipline, connected with the anxious solicitude of the mother, that the grace of God might be given to her children, was not without effect; and which was obvious from the early conversion to God of all her offspring. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he

will not depart from it." This maternal instruction was attended by the Spirit of God with very affecting discoveries of the holiness of the divine Being, and the heinousness of sin; and was the means, Mr. T. Christian has been heard to remark, of leading him to religious decision; whilst the salutary effect of his mother's pious admonitions, during his juvenile years, has never been effaced.

With peculiar devoutness Mrs. Christian acknowledged the Lord in all her ways, and most cheerfully acquiesced in an over-ruling and gracious providence; her views of God, in his control over the operations of nature, being such as to assure her mind that he was both too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. The writer has a most distinct recollection of a remark she made one Sabbath day when in company with her at the house of her daughter, Mrs. Coy, of Sproxtton, and which is illustrative of this trait in her character. It was then in the midst of harvest. The season had been remarkably wet, which had done much injury to the fruits of the earth. The morning of that day had been somewhat fine, and it was anticipated that it might continue, but in the afternoon the skies gathered blackness, and the rain as usual began to descend; when, to some observations which were made on the gloomy change of the weather, she said, "'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: and if he see good to permit the whole of the harvest to be destroyed, we have not just ground as sinners to complain; and if the loss should be the means of humbling and saving the souls of some who forget God, the gain will be immense."

The fortitude of this good woman, and her submission to the righteous disposal of God, were

brought to a severe test in the summer of 1814. At an early hour in the morning of the 7th of August, her beloved husband went out into the fields a shepherding, in a state of usual good health, when at about the hour he was expected to have returned to breakfast, he was brought home a corpse. The melancholy event produced a sensation which cannot well be described, not only amongst the members of the bereaved family, but in the society generally throughout the circuit. His death was occasioned by a stroke which he received on the temple, or side of the head, from the kick of a horse. He had ridden on the animal into the fields, and having occasion to alight to remove some sheep which had strayed out of one pasture into another, whilst walking behind the horse,—which was previously never known to strike,—it is supposed he touched it with his stick, which caused it to lift up its heel, from which the fatal stroke was received. The servant boy was with him, and perceiving his master fall, he ran to his assistance,—but he was motionless. The poor lad was filled with consternation, and shaking the prostrated body, he cried,—“Master! Master!” But no voice answered: the spirit which had so recently animated the human frame had fled “to God who gave it.”

“How many fall as sudden; not as safe.”

The shock was calculated powerfully to affect the susceptible feelings of his widow; but the consolations of religion were a solace to her wounded mind. She sorrowed, but not as those who are without hope. Mr. Christian was an amiable man, and had long held intercourse with God in the exercise of prayer and faith. In his demeanour he was quiet and

peaceable; his natural disposition inclining him rather to sit as a hearer at the feet of others, than to be forward to act in the capacity of an instructor. And whilst he was "swift to hear" and "slow to speak," he was more especially careful in being "slow to wrath." He was an humble follower of the meek and lowly Redeemer. But the estimate of his religious character and attainments was to be formed from his private conduct more than from his public profession. He was not however ashamed of religion, nor destitute of ability to appreciate the excellencies of others, whilst he glorified God for the grace which he saw in them. His house was a house of prayer: morning and evening, and at noontide, the knee was bowed at the family altar. During the busy time of hay and harvest, at the dinner hour, when he has had many work people about him in his employ, he would say, "Come, we must kneel down, and pray to God a little: for 'prayer and provender hinder no man.'" The conduct of Mr. Christian, in this respect, speaks much; and the correctness of the sentiment which he uttered, was borne out by matter of fact in his own concerns of life. Prayer with him was not a pretext for negligence and sloth. The habits of industry and economy were sedulously inculcated upon his family and persons in his employment. But whilst in this manner he prosecuted the business of the world, he made it subordinate to religion in the welfare of his soul and the glory of God. And to this may be added, he was "given to hospitality," and was a man most esteemed by those who knew him best. At the period he was called to exchange mortality for everlasting life, he was in the fifty-third year of his age.

Mrs. Christian survived her husband nearly twelve years. She finished her earthly pilgrimage, May 17, 1826, aged sixty-four, in the triumphant prospect of joining those who had crossed the flood before her, on the blissful shores of the heavenly Canaan.

But little is recollected by the writer to have been said respecting the early experience of this devout and justly to be esteemed individual. All that he can call to his remembrance are the following few particulars. The Spirit of God had begun to operate upon her mind betimes, which checked her in those propensities which she felt to follow after the delusive pleasures of the world and the vanities of dress. And whilst she was yet young, but growing up to womanhood, at probably about the age of sixteen or seventeen, she was induced to meet in class, when but as yet she "saw men as trees walking." This was at Great Gonerby, her native village. A short time afterwards, when she became more fully acquainted with the depravity of the heart, and had been brought to realise that gracious change without which no person can "see the kingdom of God," she remarked to her class-leader, Mr. Roe, that she often felt ashamed of her extreme ignorance when she first attended class, and wondered how he bore so patiently with her, and especially that he did not reprove her for the gaiety of her dress. To which he replied; "Why, my dear, I did not see any utility in so doing, as I was persuaded if the axe were laid at the root of the tree, the branches would come down with it as a consequence." Intimating thereby, that "if any man," according to the apostolic declaration, "be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This was the case with

Mrs. Christian ; and she ever afterwards avoided conformity to the fashions of the world ; for being “transformed by the renewing of her mind,” she studied to “prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” And in imitation of “the holy women in the old time, who trusted in God,” her attire was that of neatness and modesty.—Mrs. Christian had a pious sister, who was married to Mr. Weaver, of Newark, after the death of his former wife, Miss E. Christian, to whom reference has previously been made.

Mr. Wesley never preached at Grantham it would seem more than once. The circumstance is mentioned in his Journals, and appears there in the order of his route in a part of Lincolnshire, as follows:—“1781. *Sun. JULY 1.* I preached as usual, at Misterton, at Overthorpe, and at Epworth.—*Mon.* 2. I preached at Scotter about eight ; at Brigg, at noon ; and in the evening, in the old church yard, at Grimsby, to almost all the people of the town, on, ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.’ The late proof of it is in the glorious death of Robert Wilkinson ; and the behaviour of his widow,

“So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so resigned,

“I believe, will hardly be forgotten by any that were witnesses of it.—*Tues. 3.* I preached at Claythorp, three miles from Grimsby. Here, likewise, there has been an outpouring of the Spirit. I was reminded here of what I saw at Cardiff almost forty years ago. I could not go into any of the little houses, but presently it was filled with people ; and I was constrained to pray with them in every house, or they would not be satisfied. Several



of these are clearly renewed in love, and give a plain, scriptural account of their experience; and there is scarce a house in the village, wherein there is not one or more earnestly athirst for salvation.—

*Wed.* 4. I called upon an honest man, and, I hope, took him out of the hands of an egregious quack; who was pouring in medicines upon him, for what he called, ‘wind in the nerves!’ In the evening I preached at Louth, now as quiet as Grimsby. When shall we learn ‘to despair of none?’—

*Thurs.* 5. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Brackenbury again, though still exceeding weak. His chapel was thoroughly filled in the evening; I trust with sincere hearers.—*Fri.* 6. I crossed over to Langham-row, where the high wind would not suffer me to preach abroad. But the house tolerably contained the congregation; most of whom attended again at five in the morning.—

*Sat.* 7. I designed to go from hence to Boston; but a message from Mr. Pugh, desiring me to preach in his church on Sunday, made me alter my design. So, procuring a guide, I set out for Rauceby. We rode through Tattershall, where there are large remains of a stately castle; and there was in the chancel of the old church, the finest painted glass (so it was esteemed) in England; but the prudent owner, considering that it brought him in nothing by staying there, lately sold it for a round sum of money. Here I met with such a ferry as I never saw before. The boat was managed by an honest countryman who just knew nothing of the matter, and a young woman equally skilful. However, though the river was fifty yards broad, we got over it in an hour and a half. We then went on through the fens in a marvellous road, sometimes tracked, and sometimes

not, till about six we came to Rauceby, and found the people gathered from all parts. I preached on those words in the Second Lesson, 'There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Sythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.'—*Sun.* 8. The congregation was still larger. Hence I rode over to Welby, and preached in Mr. Dodwell's church in the afternoon and in the evening, to a numerous and serious congregation.—*Mon.* 9. I preached at Grantham in the open air, (for no house would contain the congregation,) and none made the least disturbance, any more than at Newark, (where I preached in the evening,) or in the Castle-yard at Lincoln, on *Tues.* 10.—*Wed.* 11. I preached at Newton-upon-Trent, and Gainsborough."

This extract furnishes a part of his engagements for eleven days in succession, and is a fair specimen of the indefatigable labours of this great and good man. He was at this time in his seventy-ninth year.

It was named at page 162 that when Mr. Wesley visited Grantham at the period above stated, he preached on the premises occupied by Mrs. Fisher. This excellent female attained to great celebrity amongst the friends of the Redeemer in these parts: and to many who were acquainted with her during her life time, her name continues to be endeared. Her works yet praise her. Having found amongst the Methodists the enjoyment of gospel liberty, she became a most zealous and liberal supporter of those means which she believed were especially adapted to bring lost sinners to God. In proportion to her income, which was an annuity of a hundred pounds, her charities were extensive. By a careful expenditure upon herself, and general econ-

omy, she was enabled to save out of her yearly pittance a considerable sum, which she sacredly applied to the laudable object of christian enterprise. That spirit of devout and holy enthusiasm inspired her, which is marked by an emulation which aims only at pleasing God. Her personal figure was what is considered well formed and graceful: whilst she possessed a fine and extensively cultivated mind. In her manners she was affable, and in disposition affectionate and obliging. Her judgment was sound, and her perception quick; which were obvious in the judicious management of her domestic affairs, and particularly in the aptitude which she displayed in discriminating betwixt truth and error on subjects that relate to religious experience and practice. Her ability in the latter was extensively and profitably exercised in the office of class-leader, which she sustained for a series of years.

But little has been gathered of Mrs. Fisher's manner of life previously to her conversion. It appears she had followed the gaities and fashions of the world, until she was arrested in her career of opposition to the claims which true religion had upon her, by some worldly disappointment and domestic troubles. She saw her folly, and turned aside from scenes of dissipation, and the path of sin. But how to heal the wound inflicted in her mind she knew not. At this juncture, she heard, it is said, Mr. Wesley preach in Moorfields, or Kennington Common. The word reached her heart, and illuminated her mind. She distinctly perceived what it was she wanted, and the way by which the blessing she needed was to be obtained. And if not at that time, yet very shortly afterwards, she found

him whose prerogative it is "to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort all that mourn." Her spirit which had been in bondage, was now delivered from its captivity; and she was brought to experience that those whom "the Son" makes "free," are "free indeed." Soon after this she left her connexions in London, and came down to reside at Muston, where she lodged at the house of Mr. Goodacre. Here she joined the society, to whom she became helpful; and in which association she obtained much profit to her own soul, and became more fully established in the faith of Christ. This was in the year 1779.

In 1781, she is found occupying the house in Watergate, Grantham, having gone there to support Mr. Derry against the hand of bigotry and intolerance which at that time was lifted up to crush the cause of methodism in the town. Her purpose having been accomplished in securing to Mr. Derry a residence, she retired for awhile to her former recluse at Muston. How long she continued either at Grantham or Muston is not exactly known; but about the year 1784 she went to live at Great Gonerby, where she took a respectable house, in the middle part of the street on the west side of the North Road, and which recently belonged to Mr. Robert Eminson, surgeon. Preaching was removed to this house from T. Emery's, on account of the greater accommodation which it afforded. As yet, no permanent situation had been provided for the ark of methodism. Hitherto in this neighbourhood, the means of grace had been held in private houses, which at best are but a precarious tenure, their security for that object being made to depend on the life or caprice of the occupiers or owners. In the year 1786, Mrs. Fisher purchased a small stone

building at Gonerby, which had been occupied as a barn, and fitted it up for a chapel, which she settled upon the plan of the Connexion for the use of the society. This was done principally, if not entirely at her own expense. The chapel is still occupied, but is destined soon to give place to a new one, of much larger dimensions, in another part of the village, and which is now in a course of erection. There was no other chapel besides this, in what now forms the Grantham circuit, for the space of sixteen years afterwards. The personal gratification of worshipping in this chapel, as a fruit of her labour, was not long indulged to Mrs. Fisher. It was during the following year that she heard a voice from the suburbs of Lincoln, crying, "Come over and help us." One Sarah Parrat, a poor woman, who lived at Bracebridge, two miles from Lincoln, and was a methodist, used to walk to Sturton, a distance of seven miles to meet in class: whilst there on one of these occasions, she was regretting to some of her christian friends, after the religious services had closed, that methodism had found none to support it in so large and populous a place as Lincoln, and where sin was so predominant. It was a subject which had long been upon her mind, and had frequently moved her in prayer to God. A pious stranger who had tarried in the village for the sabbath, and who had joined in worshp with the society, remarked to Sarah's observations, that a lady residing at Great Gonerby had lately built a chapel there, and was very charitable and intent upon doing good, and who probably might be induced to remove her abode to Lincoln, if she where solicited to do so, and the case properly laid before her. Upon the influence of this suggestion, Sarah set off

on foot the next day to Gonerby, a distance of twenty-seven miles from Bracebridge, to consult with Mrs. Fisher on the subject, both of whom were entire strangers to each other. An interview was had, when Sarah endeavoured to press upon the notice of Mrs. Fisher the object of her visit, and to expatiate upon the advantages which were likely to result from such an enterprise. But it was not to be expected that Sarah's reasonings were sufficient to bring her hastily to determine upon an encounter so difficult and important. She did not, however, treat poor Sarah's embassy with indifference. She listened to what she had to say, and afterwards deliberated upon it, thinking that probably the interposition of Providence might be in it: and if so, though the duty presented an aspect that was arduous, and dangerous, and self-denying; she felt herself obligated to submit, and was equally cheerful to obey the call of God. After serious reflection, the consultation of pious friends, and prayer, her conviction was that she should make the trial. In the latter end of the year 1787, in humble dependence on Almighty aid, she took her departure from Gonerby, and pitched her tent in Lincoln, for the express purpose of facilitating the introduction of methodism in that ancient city, where the inhabitants in general were extremely ignorant of evangelical truth. Ignominy, reproach, and insult, were consequent upon this adventure; but which were endured, by this christian heroine, with unwearied fortitude and forbearance. Forty-eight years have elapsed since this attempt was made upon the citadel of Satan. "Small and feeble was" the "day" of commencement; but in tracing up the work through the interval of time which has elapsed, the devout investigator is constrained to exclaim, "What hath

God wrought?" Mrs. Fisher having taken a house for her own residence, hired a place near the Gowts-bridge, the only one she could procure, and which had been used as a kind of lumber room. In this small and humble sanctuary the first society was formed, and consisted of four females; these were Dorothy Fisher, Sarah Parrat, Hannah Calder, and Elizabeth Keyley. After occupying but for two years this upper room, Mrs. Fisher bought a piece of ground on the south of the Waterside, betwixt the Highbridge and the Swingbridge, which she gave to the cause, and by various exertions succeeded in raising a chapel. She also built a house behind the chapel for her own residence, which she left to the connexion; and from which she removed a few years before she left Lincoln to reside at Gainsborough, to accommodate the superintendent preacher and his family when first stationed upon the circuit. This house continued to be the residence of one of the preachers until some years after the erection of the second chapel. Mrs. Fisher's removal to Gainsborough was in 1805, and was owing to the marriage of Miss Elizabeth Goodacre to Mr. Thomas Duncan of that place. This young woman was born during the time Mrs. Fisher abode at the house of her father at Muston. From some endearing actions of the child, she found herself strongly moved in affection towards it, which induced her, on leaving Muston, to propose to the parents to educate and bring up the little offspring as her own daughter; to which kindly offer they acceded; and she became ever afterwards her constant and beloved companion. The marriage of Miss G. took place in 1805, when Mrs. Fisher accompanied her to Gainsborough. But her earthly sojourn was drawing to a close. On the twenty-second of

June, 1806, she was called to finish her christian course, when she was enabled to exult in the prospect of the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for" her, aged seventy-three, having been a member of the Methodist society twenty-seven years. On the following Sunday, her death was improved by Mr. Woodall, on 1 John ii. 2, 3, to a crowded congregation, in the Gainsborough chapel.

That christian benevolence was a very prominent feature in the character of Mrs. Fisher must be obvious; and is set forth to invite the imitation of all that behold it, and who wish to stand approved of God at the last day, as faithful stewards "of the mammon of unrighteousness." Her constant study was to do good, and to be useful both to the bodies and the souls of others. To benefit the human family, her efforts knew no bounds but the limits of her purse: and if restricted in this respect, her sympathy and her prayers carried her infinitely beyond the boundary of her temporal resources. If all who profess and call themselves Christians, or even those who make pretensions to serious godliness, were to follow the laudable example of this excellent woman in religious philanthropy, what glorious results might be expected. Coffers of gold and silver would be emptied into the treasury of the Lord; the redundant proceeds of compound interest, which are annually augmenting the useless capital, would find their way to the same source; and the prodigal expenditure on dress and luxuries of various kinds, would also be cut off and sacrificed to the same cause; whence, from the influx of such costly offerings,—all brought in to subserve the interest of true piety,—the gospel trumpet would soon be sounded, and chapels erected, in all



the towns and villages throughout Great Britain and Ireland; and Bibles and Missionaries sent into every nation under heaven, by which means the great charter of gospel liberty and salvation would be made known to "every kindred, and tongue, and nation!" How noble the enterprise! How pleasing the thought, to behold all christian people, to the utmost extent of their ability, coming forward to the help of the Lord, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." And is it more than God requires? "Freely ye have received; freely give." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." And this is a state of sacrifice to which the Church must come before all flesh shall see the salvation of God. The scale must preponderate on the side of love to souls, rather than on the side of the love of money. And when this is the case, to withhold from the cause of God on the ground of necessity, or the claims of justice elsewhere, will be more painfully felt, than what the parsimonious feels when he gives a trifle from his abundance. To the latter, in whom the love of the world prevails, to give abundantly, would be to cross the course of habit, and be felt worse than death: whilst to the former, when means become ample, his pleasures are augmented in proportion to his liberality. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth."

"Charity is twice blessed:

It blesses him that gives and him that takes."

"And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." It keeps the world in a state of moral poverty, whilst it impoverishes his own soul. But a premium of a hundred pounds is offered for the best treatise on the subject of covetous-

ness. When it appears, the probability is that it will become extensively popular; and be the means, it is hoped, of arousing thousands from their apathy to regard the much neglected duty of diffusive and disinterested benevolence; and thus prove themselves to be indeed the followers of Him, "who though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

Mrs. Fisher was her own almoner. It did not enter into her plans of economy to leave hundreds behind her—which she might have done had she been so disposed,—to be possessed by others, and to be applied to objects she knew not what. When Mr. John Simpson,—who now resides at Grantham as a supernumerary preacher,—travelled in the Lincoln circuit, in the year 1802, he had the honor of drawing up her will. Not that he volunteered his services in this work, or had any intention to deprive a legal adviser of his fee in the execution of his task. But when it was proposed to him, he professed his ignorance of such affairs, and begged leave to decline. She however urged him to attend to it, and presented him with a copy of Mr. Wesley's will as his guide, which is found in his "Life by Messrs. Coke and Moore." The whole of her property comprised but a few articles of wearing apparel, and furniture, which she bequeathed to her adopted daughter, Mrs. Duncan. Mrs. Simpson at that time was the bandmate of Mrs. F. The general characteristics which are her given of this inestimable female, are in accordance, it is believed, with the views entertained of her by Mrs. Simpson.—Mrs. Duncan died several years ago. She had known religion from a child; and departed this life in peace with God, when she entered upon that rest where grief and sorrow are not known. She

left a family behind her to mourn their loss; one of whom, a son, is now an acceptable local preacher residing at Gainsborough.

The society at Gonerby was comprised of two classes at the time Mrs. Fisher removed to Lincoln, and Mr. Roe to Grantham; and when the care of which was committed to Edward Bee and George Pinner; both of whom are living and continue to retain the office of leaders. Mr. Pinner is a native of Dodford near Daventry; and was brought to God amongst the General Baptists. He came to reside at Gonerby in the year 1795, when he soon united himself to the society. His attachment to the doctrines and discipline of methodism has been constant and sincere. Mr. Bee was born at Waddington. His mother was a god-fearing woman, and very frequently attended the ministry of the calvinists at Lincoln; and would take her son, Edward, when but a little boy, along with her, on whose mind she endeavoured to impress the importance of eternal things. He was apprenticed at Gonerby, where he constantly attended the Methodist chapel. His mind was soon brought to yield to the force of truth, where he obtained redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. He soon joined himself to the society, which was in the year 1785. On entering into business on his own account, he united in marriage with Sarah Dawn of Muston, sister to Mr. T. Dawn of Brether Hills. Having lived together, for a great number of years, in the most affectionate harmony, he was called to sustain the painful bereavement of her society, by the hand of death, in the month of July, 1834. Their house had been open for the entertainment of the preachers for the space of forty years, or upwards. In this hospitality to the messengers of sal-

vation, Messrs. Ashbourn and Pinner contributed for nearly the same period; and which is still continued by the latter, and Mrs. Reckerby. No person could be more attentive to their comfort than Mrs. Bee; or give to the ministers of Christ a more kindly reception. She was a tender and affectionate mother, and very solicitous for her children's welfare; and rejoiced much to see them walking in the truth; and as bitterly grieved when she saw any of them swerve from the path of peace and religious rectitude, which in two or three instances was her painful experience to witness. A degree of diffidence was observable in her natural disposition, which with the exercise of various trials, led to occasional backwardness in her attendance with her christian friends upon the social means of grace. This was her regret; as she was aware, by yielding to the influence of this temptation, she deprived herself of that encouragement and consolation which she generally found consequent on class meetings, when a sense of duty and her courage were sufficiently strong to induce her to attend them. Adverse providences during a few of the latter years of her life, together with declining health, tended much to oppress her, but which she bore with meekness and evident effort to glorify God. A sudden exhaustion at last prostrated all her powers; when, for the few days she was confined to her bed, she was incapable of utterance, and sank into a state of apparent insensibility. The weary wheels of life at last stood still, when she died without a struggle or a groan, in the sixty-fourth year of her age. The general tenour of her life and character was such as to afford her friends the evidence of an undoubted scriptural hope of her eternal safety, although deprived of her own vocal testimony of what

were her prospects of heaven in the last mortal conflict;—a circumstance which may serve to gratify surviving relatives, but not an essential evidence to the everlasting salvation of the deceased.

The society at Gonerby, towards the latter end of the year 1833, sustained a loss in the death of Mrs. Rachael Treadgold, daughter of Mr. G. Ashbourne. She was sincerely and ardently attached to the cause of methodism. When but a child she was savingly converted to God, and ever afterwards walked in the light of his reconciled countenance. Her disposition was naturally amiable; added to which, her enjoyment of religion, together with other qualifications, gave to her character those attractions which secured her much esteem in the circle of her acquaintances. Her death was premature and unexpected: but when her Lord came, he found her watching. The merits of the Divine atonement were the object of her faith for acceptance with God, and on which she solely and consciously relied; whilst her mind, when brought to the valley of the shadow of death, was delightfully cheered with the prospect of the heavenly inheritance which awaited her, beyond the gloomy passage. Her mother, Mrs. Ashbourne, is yet alive; an old pilgrim, bending beneath a weight of more than fourscore years, but daily rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

The old chapel at Gonerby, which is about to be given up, displays a peculiarity of architectural taste in its interior arrangement. An eye to economy appears to have been had in some of the contrivances. But economy is not the only object to be consulted in the erection or fitting up of chapels. A regard to the accommodation of the largest possible number of people in this chapel was had, more than to symmetry

and order, or the ease and convenience of the speaker. The inside dimensions of the building are about sixteen feet by twenty-eight. There are two galleries: one in front, and the other on one side. The latter is brought so near to the pulpit that the people occupying it nearly come upon the preacher, which to him in speaking, when there is a full congregation, makes it very oppressive. And the pulpit, from its peculiar position, and the contractedness of the stairs, renders it a work of some considerable difficulty for a big-bodied man to make his ingress. The side gallery was put up afterwards, at the entire expense of a good man, whose name is not just now recollected, and who has been for upwards of thirty years "in Abraham's bosom." Notwithstanding the temporary inconveniencies of this chapel, it has stood as a monument of the zeal and liberality of Mrs. Fisher; and has been a sacred spot, in which many souls have experienced, by the truths proclaimed in it, "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness." And of this "Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." And when "the Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there."

What HAS BEEN, is frequently instituted as an enquiry by succeeding generations. To the children's children of the present inhabitants of Gonerby,—who will be more extensively devoted to God, it is hoped, than their forefathers,—the observations which are here recorded, may not be altogether void of interest.

The preachers stationed upon the Gainsborough Circuit, from the year 1776 to 1786, whose labours extended to these parts, are as follow:—

- 1776. John Easton, William Thorn, Joseph Harper.
- 1777. John Easton, William Thorn, M. F.
- 1778. Lancelot Harrison, Joseph Taylor.
- 1779. Lancelot Harrison, William Warrener. T. Warwick.
- 1780. Isaac Brown, Jeremiah Robertshaw, George Button.
- 1781. Jeremiah Robertshaw, W. Warrener, P. Hardeastle.
- 1782. Thomas Corbet, James Barry, Thomas Bartholomew.
- 1783. Thomas Corbet, Thomas Wride, James Wrag.
- 1784. Thomas Carlill, Peter Mill, Samuel Botts.
- 1785. Thomas Carlill, Robert Scott, Samuel Botts.
- 1786. William Dufton, George Mowatt, T. Ellis, A. Kilham.

## CHAPTER VII.

WHILST CONNECTED WITH THE NOTTINGHAM CIRCUIT.  
—STATE OF THE SOCIETY AT GRANTHAM.—CROXTON  
VISITED.

The proximity of Newark and Grantham being greater to Nottingham than Gainsborough, they were taken from the latter and appended to the former circuit in 1787. At this time the cause in Grantham was in a low and languishing state. Some untoward circumstances arose which militated against its prosperity. Among other things, an individual, making a flaming profession, and acting as a local preacher, came to reside in Vine-street; where he had not continued long, before it became apparent that his business was not carried on in a manner the most respectable, and which necessitated him to leave the town. And to make the matter worse, preaching had been removed to his house. This gave to the enemies of methodism an occasion to triumph. The little society which had endured joyfully, for conscience sake, the peltings of many pitiless storms from the keen blasts of persecution were now ready to “hang their harps upon the willows.” A shock like this seemed to be more than they knew how well to withstand. For although most of the members could distinguish betwixt right principles in religion and an hypocritical profession, and also betwixt the necessity of maintaining those



principles and the possibility of departing from them—so as not to allow of either the hypocrisy or the apostacy of a professor to unloosen their attachment to religion or methodism; yet they knew, at the same time, the handle which would be made of this unhappy affair, by those who were watching occasion against them. And the aspersions which were cast upon them on that account, tended to intimidate some who were favorably disposed towards the gospel, and not being brought sufficiently under the dominion of grace, they were induced to withdraw from the cause altogether; whilst others who had been in a condition of neutrality, were inclined to indulge in an invective spirit, and thereby strengthen the hands of the hostile foes of methodism. This was a sifting season to the society, and subjected to the test of sincerity, the profession of every member. For some time after this they had no preaching in Grantham, nor any house in which to hold their meetings; when the few who continued members were wont to meet at Gonerby.

Without any intention to screen from proper censure a member of the Methodist society who acts inconsistently with his religious profession, where is either the justice or reason in persecuting and calumniating the society for that member's fault; and when there is evidence to show that the society neither countenances nor extenuates the crime of the individual? Were the persons who do this to be interrogated as to their religion, the probable reply would be; "Why we are no Methodists." Pray then what are you? are you infidels? "No." What are you then? "Why we are Churchmen." And are there no sinners,—no drunkards, swearers, adulterers, sabbath-breakers, liars, insolvents, prodigals,

or covetous,—amongst those who call themselves Churchmen? Upon an aggregate calculation is not the number of delinquents two to one? But it is replied, “We do not make that profession.” That profession! Why have you no creed?—are there no books in which you profess to believe? “Yes to besure, we believe the Bible and the Common Prayer Book.” And do the Methodists profess to believe more? And therefore by whomsoever the same standard of infallible truth, the Bible, is admitted, the same obedience is required. The tables then may be fairly turned: and if inconsistency and hypocrisy form a justifiable ground for persecution and reproach, these zealous pretenders to churchism may perceive who has merited the greatest share. But let that christian community, the members of which are *all* living within the boundary of moral rectitude which the scriptures prescribe, “cast the first stone” at another religious society, when they perceive any of the party swerving from the path of duty in which they are required steadily to persevere. A restriction of this kind would impose silence; and a cessation from slanderous hostility would issue as a consequence. But the day has gone by when the violence of opposition met with public countenance and support. A degree of reproach, however, may not excite surprise, when occasioned by the same inconsistency of conduct in religious professors. And in fact, if this scandal of the cross should cease with the Methodists, it may be esteemed no favorable omen of their piety; but rather of laxity in morals and in the exercise of wholesome discipline. It will evidence that they have become too much like their neighbours, when their iniquity shall prevail so commonly amongst

them, that it shall cease to be looked upon as singular: unless, indeed, the time come when all sects and parties,—the Establishment itself not excepted,—shall exclude from their communion all persons whose lives do not exemplify the gospel of “the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

On the subject of Wesleyan Discipline, the reader is referred to the first chapter of this work, and particularly to that part which treats on class meetings. It is no disparagement to a christian society, when a professor acts inconsistently and proper means are used for his correction. But when disciplinary measures are neglected, and the delinquent is allowed to continue in his sin and retain his membership in the community, then it is that censure falls heavily on the society to which he belongs. Methodism aims—not at the destruction, but—solely at the rescuing of sinners from their sins. And if in some, or even in many instances, its exertions have been frustrated, it rather claims commendation for its well meant endeavours, and for any degree of good which it has instrumentally effected, than merits the censure and vituperation of such as profess and call themselves christians. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost; and not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. In the apostolic churches the conduct of some excited the surprise of St. Paul because that they were so soon moved from their steadfastness, after having ran well for a season. And to Titus he gave direction, “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;

knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." The concluding clause of the Methodist Rules runs thus: "These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule both of faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls."—The gospel "net" being "cast," there are "gathered of every kind" into the pale of the church, where the faithful servants of Christ in the exercise of a wholesome discipline, which discriminates betwixt "the good" and "the bad," retain those that walk consistently, "but cast the bad away."

It was sometime in this year when Grantham was appended to Nottingham, that regular preaching was again commenced at Grantham. Mr. Newcome, Ironmonger, who resided in the house adjoining the Angel Inn, opened a place to the Methodists at the bottom end of the yard, next to the Back-lane, in which they continued to assemble for the space of sixteen years. But for nearly half that time the preachers who visited the town, which was for the most part on a Sunday evening, were without accommodations for lodging, and so had to return to Gonerby, where they had preached in the afternoon. After this, Mr. Newcome having joined the society took them in, together with Mr. W.

Wilson and another individual or two, as circumstances occurred. The preaching place was a chamber over the smithey, and that not a very large one. The ascent was by a moveable step ladder, in a narrow passage leading from the yard into the lane, at the end of the building;—a very inconvenient mode of entrance, and not a little dangerous at certain times. And to avoid the pranks which many were disposed to play off upon them, they found it both prudent and expedient for the most part to set a watch. The value of religion however, was not diminished by the homeliness of the situation thus occupied; nor were the presence of the Saviour and his benefits withholden on that account. But of the despite of some, it might be applied,—

“ Yet not many wise, His summons obey;  
And great ones despise So vulgar a way.”

The brazier and whitesmith who made use of the lower room, not being like-minded with his fellow-occupants above him, felt himself disposed at times to be a little troublesome to them. His mode of annoyance was to blow the bellows and hammer away on his steady, during their occasional meetings for prayer and preaching on week nights. When kindly solicited to desist, his regular hours of the day for work having come to a close, his apology would be, that the job was urgent, and must not be delayed. The society finding they had no security against these vexatious interruptions, and that this coppersmith was likely to continue doing them much harm, they agreed with Mr. Newcome, after the lapse of a few years, to occupy the whole building; when the bellows and steady, and all the noisy Vulcanian implements, were removed to a situation where their inharmonious sounds became less offensive.

The village of Croxton lies seven miles from Grantham, on the Melton road. The whole of which is the property of His Grace the Duke of Rutland. Mrs. Scoffield and her four daughters, Ann, Mary, Elizabeth, and Alice, were among the first in this village that gave any signs of decided piety during the latter part of the last century; and among whom originated the formation of a Methodist society. They had received their impressions of good under the ministry of Dr. Ford, at Freeby. A melancholy event a short time after this took place; which, on account of the profitable reflections it affords, may justify its insertion. A young man in the village had recently paid some attention to Ann, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Scoffield; but since she had become serious she was resolved in her own mind to break off the connexion, unless he afforded her stronger evidence of his decision in religion. Her determination was to act carefully and scripturally in an affair of so much importance as that of marriage; preferring rather to live a single life than be tied to one who was not like-minded with herself. She was not content to wait, as some in similar circumstances are, until after their union, to witness the grace of God in him; but was bent upon seeing it before hand, as being far the safer way. And whether she considered it or not, it seldom occurs, when two persons, at the time of their marriage, are not in the same way of thinking in matters of religion,—the one serious and the other either careless or undecided for God and heaven,—that the religious individual has influence sufficient to win over the opposite or undecided party to the love of the truth. But rather otherwise, the importunity or hostility of the latter is the means of estranging the

feet and the heart of the former from the Lord and his righteous ways, or they have a clog for life. At this dangerous reef, upon which many split and make shipwreck, or sustain such injury that they become scarcely sea-worthy, so that the voyage of salvation is prosecuted by them with great hazard, Ann was mindful to steer her course agreeably to the directions of her heavenly pilot, and not to yield the management of the helm to her own passions in weathering a point of so much difficulty. She knew that she had "liberty to marry:" but that her heavenly Father, whose love she did not wish to grieve, had prescribed the characteristic limits of such "liberty," by laying down this imperative restriction,—"**BUT ONLY IN THE LORD.**" The being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is an anomaly, and what ought not to be tolerated. It would be a great blessing to the cause of Zion, and secure much happiness to individuals, were a stricter discipline enforced than what is generally attended to in such instances of departure from apostolic and Divine injunctions. All single young persons in christian communion ought to be faithfully warned by their ministers and pious counsellors, against forming an alliance of this nature, on the ground of its being a great evil; and which, like every other sin, when committed, involves guilt, and exposes the transgressor more fearfully to the loss of heaven. When a member of the Methodist community marries with an unbeliever, such person is required by rule to be expelled the society. This ought to be fully understood by individuals who are single, that they may be upon their guard against the advances of improper persons; for if once the affections become entangled, it is generally

perceived that the advice of christian friends, and the menaces of church discipline and of God's displeasure, come too late. Now the passions take the reins of government, and these are found to drive over both reason and religion. But many pretexts are used to justify the conduct in completing the alliance which has been commenced :—the person is of very agreeable manners,—possesses many natural excellencies,—has got a *deal of money*,—or is not a heathen, an infidel, or an unbeliever in the gross sense. But is he converted to God ? or is he seeking after it as the one thing needful ? Can you hold council together on heavenly subjects ? And is he willing to walk in company with you to the house of God, and to bow the knee at the family altar ? Has he not virtually promised,—or is he not bound by the scriptures in which he professes to believe,—to “renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh ; and to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life” ? Now if he has not attended to these things, it is enquired wherein he differs from an unbeliever or an infidel ; except it is in this, that he adds hypocrisy to the practice of infidelity ? But enough has been said. There are able treatises written on the subject, to consult which the reader is requested, if farther information be desired, or if he think the few plain passing remarks bear too heavily on his own case ; and in which treatises he will find the question of unequal marriages more fully developed, and set forth in all its shades of deformity and darkening consequences.

But to return, Ann Scofield was not married to the young man who paid his addresses to her ; nor



was the object she sought after, in his conversion to God, ever realised to her knowledge. One evening when in company with her and the family at her mother's house, the subject of religion was introduced and variously discussed, until the night had advanced, and the hour of departure and retirement had arrived, when a hymn was sung by the females; and as he was about to depart, Ann suggested that as they were going to family prayer, he had better tarry whilst they had engaged in the exercise and join with them in the duty. Hitherto he had said but little, and the conversation which had been carried on in the course of the evening had not been it appeared the most agreeable to his feelings; but now that prayer was proposed, and to join in which he must assume the humble attitude of going down on his knees before God, the pride of his heart and the enmity of the carnal mind broke through all restraint, and, with an awful imprecation, he declared that before he would become a Methodist, he would go to hell headlong! and immediately left the house. Melancholy to relate, on the following day, or sometime in the same week, whilst he was employed in brewing, he fell with his head foremost into the large copper of boiling wort! He was alone when it happened; and by some desperate effort which he made, he struggled out of the copper by himself. His shrieks brought some to the spot, where they found him a fearful spectacle to behold, —most fatally scalded, and with his bowels gushing forth,\* which he sustained in his hands. This latter circumstance, shocking as it is to the imagination, was produced most probably by the sud-

\* See Acts i. 18, and Dr. A. Clarke's notes upon the passage.

den and violent agony into which he was thrown, and the convulsive effort which he made to deliver himself from the boiling furnace. He survived the awful catastrophe a few days, and then expired. Whether the deplorable end of this young man is to be looked upon as a judgment from God or not, the reader is left to infer what he pleases. But to what conclusions soever a person may be brought, it is not to be forgotten, that "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." And the record of it here is designed as a monitory lesson to avoid all horrible imprecations,† and to speak of God and the sacred services which he claims from his creatures, with becoming reverence.‡

The exact time when preaching was commenced at Croxton is not ascertained; nor is it recollected who was the first to preach there. But it is gener-

† "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God : depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain."—Ps. cxxxix. 19, 20.

"Every one that sweareth shall be cut off."—Zec. v. 3.

"Because of swearing the land mourneth."\*—Jer. xxiii. 10.

\* "It chills my blood to hear the bless'd Supreme,  
Rudely appealed to, on each trifling theme!  
——Maintain your rank, vulgarity despise;  
To *swear* is neither brave, polite, nor wise.  
You would not swear upon a bed of death:  
Reflect! your Maker *now* can stop your breath!"

‡ "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."\*—Heb. xii. 28, 29.

\* "Holy and rev'rent is thy Maker's name:  
With holy rev'rence then pronounce the same.  
While angels bear it trembling on their tongues;—  
His love and grace the theme of all their songs;—  
That name which angels high in bliss, adore—  
That sacred name! do thou profane no more."

ally supposed that in the year 1787, or, according to some, three or four years earlier, a society was formed and occasional preaching extended. The pious females at Skillington it is likely would form an early acquaintance with the Scoffields, and that, by their example and influence, methodism and its means of grace would be introduced. None of the first members remain from whom to gather the precise circumstances. But it is recollected, by certain individuals who at that time were young, how that Mrs. Ellen Christian was in the habit of addressing assemblies of people in the house of Mrs. Scoffield, in her usual way of scripture exposition and general exhortation, and of conducting prayer meetings, being accompanied by Mrs. Berridge and others from Skillington. Mr. Dodwell would occasionally visit Croxton and preach in the same house; and when subsequently occupied by W. Moor. The seed of divine truth which was thus sown, has yielded an extent of harvest, in fruits of righteousness, to the praise and glory of the grace of God; some of which, at different periods, has been gathered up into the garner of heaven.

Alice, the youngest daughter of Mrs. S. became the wife of Mr. Boyfield Padget, of Muston. She was a kind motherly woman, and much esteemed by the preachers, who, on their visits to Muston, always met with a christian and hospitable reception at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Padget, for a succession of years. Having had to pass through considerable bodily suffering, and of distressing pain in the head, for a length of time, in which was manifested the triumph of religious principles over the power of disease and the fear of death, Mrs. P. terminated the mortal conflict on the twenty-

fourth of November, 1823, in the fifty-seventh year of her age. Her sister, Elizabeth, was married to a person at Welby, of the name of Needham. The union was not a happy one. Her husband became a backslider from the ways of righteousness, which was a cause of great trouble and disappointment. Mary remained single. She died a few years ago at Eaton. She was esteemed a good woman, and as far as can be ascertained of her latter end, it was such as generally distinguishes the death of the righteous,—which is that of peace.

Ann was united in marriage to William Moore. He had served his apprenticeship to her father, and had undertaken the management of the business, which was that of a carpenter, for the benefit of the widow and her family; when, by his union with Ann, he became settled in the village and occupied the premises of his former master for many years, and where he died, a few years ago, in the triumph of that faith, in the exercise of which, whilst but a young man, he obtained the knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins. Ann, his wife, died a short time before him, full of faith, hope, and good works. She had long and happily possessed what the poet defines,—

“ *That which nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,—  
The soul’s calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy.*”

For forty years or upwards the preaching was retained at their house. A son and daughter of William and Ann occupy the old house of their ancestors, and in which prayer meetings were continued to be held up to the year 1835, whilst the preaching had been removed to the large kitchen of Mr. T. Handley.

Mr. John Harston, who is now living at Croxton, was a hearer of Mrs. Christian and the first preachers that visited the village, and who afterwards joined the society and soon engaged as a local preacher. In the interval of his hearing and uniting with the Methodists, he resided in London; and whilst there was an occasional hearer of the Rev. W. Romaine: or otherwise, when that clergyman came down into the country in the neighbourhood of Croxton, which in the summer season of the year he was in the habit of doing, Mr. H. embraced the opportunity of hearing him. And as he was esteemed a popular preacher, many resorted to his ministry on these occasional visits. His doctrinal views of the gospel were highly tinctured with the peculiarities of Calvinism. Hence it is supposed that Mr. H. embraced those sentiments of religious doctrine, and which he continued to hold, although employed as a local preacher amongst the Methodists. But his prudence was such, that in his discourses he seldom introduced the opinions which he favored in opposition to his brethren, but confined himself to those doctrines of the gospel in which both Calvinists and evangelical Arminians are agreed; and which, substantially, are the only doctrines that the Spirit of God owns in the awakening and conversion of sinners. His ministrations are spoken of as being acceptable and profitable; and his declining to preach among the Methodists is adverted to with regret by those who had religious acquaintance with him at the time, on account of the profit which they derived from his edifying discourses. His retirement from the society originated altogether in voluntary choice, owing to a still greater departure in sentiment from the people with whom he stood

connected in church-fellowship. This was quite consistent, and for so doing none can justly attach to him any blame. Difference of opinion has existed, and still exists, in theology. For the peculiar views which a person entertains on this subject, to God alone he stands responsible. And every man's conscience is to be respected in what relates purely to religious opinions. As far as is known, Mr. H. was always looked upon as a good man, and sincere in his profession of religion. After he joined the society, he kindly entertained the preachers at his house on their visits to Croxton; and which he continued to do, more or less, until he declined connexion with the people. These remarks are intended to cast no invidious reflection on the conduct of Mr. H. but rather otherwise; and are introduced, partly from respect due to his character, and partly as being necessary to keep up the connecting link of events which are designed to be shown in this publication. Occasional reference to Mr. H. will also have to be made in some of the farther stages of this history.

The cause in Croxton has never suffered for supporters. When there has been a reflux of assistance on one side, there has always been a commensurate influx on the other; and which has appeared, on the part of the members, in the kindly reception of the preachers from time to time, and in respect for their office and character. This country and old established society has never been destitute of the fruit of hospitality to the messengers of peace and salvation,—a fruit, which the apostle exhibits to the Corinthians in the form of justice, where he reminds that church of its penuriousness, and especially as it appeared in their conduct towards their ministers.

He directs their attention to the law, which enjoined, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." And then enquires, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." A succession of friends, as have been needed, have come forward of a willing mind to accommodate both the preacher and his horse. Among whom might be named, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson—who were the parents of Mrs. Handley,—and Mr. Hind, who are now in a better world; and subsequently, Mr. Handley and Mr. G. Hallam, together with others who are forward to share in this labour of love; and for which, as being consequent upon it, they "shall receive a righteous man's reward."

Great cause of praise is due to God for the manifest tokens of good which have resulted in this place, from the efforts of his servants in announcing the word of reconciliation. Their labour has not been spent in vain, nor their strength for nought. A consequence of these exertions has been the conversion of many sinners from the error of their ways. Drunkards have been induced to sobriety;—swearers have learned to revere the name of God;—sabbath breakers to regard as sacred the Lord's day;—the dissipated and lawless to submit themselves to good order and regularity, agreeably to the rules of civilized society, and to the moral and religious government which God exercises over those who believe in Jesus:—whilst the evils which have been prevented by the shining forth of the light of truth, can only be estimated when the Judge of quick and dead shall appear to unfold the annals of

time, and recompense every man as his negligences or improvements may have been. The salvation of the gospel, in its fullest sense also, has unquestionably been realised by many; and who having suffered awhile in the militant state, have been removed to the triumphant state in heaven. The assurance of which happy transition, is derived from the consistency of their life with their religious profession, and their exultation in the cross of Christ over sin and all its consequences, and in the joyous prospect of immortal bliss.

It is not intended, however, to be understood that all who have united with the Methodists, and who professed to derive benefit from their ministry, have done honor to the cause and proved equally faithful. No. It cannot but be regretted that there have been several at Croxton, and in other parts of the circuit, who have, at different periods, departed from the holy commandment delivered unto them, and turned their feet from the way of following the Lord fully. These backslidings in heart or life, have given occasion to the enemies of truth and righteousness to argue unfavorably of methodism, as if "no good thing" could be effected by it. But it has been sufficiently shewn that their conclusions are without foundation. Neither are they proper persons to determine in such a case. The umbrage which is taken on this account may easily be perceived. It is a mere pretext in general to justify themselves in the neglect of that sanctity of life which is enforced by the Methodists, and as demanded by the authority of heaven. There is a feigned attempt on the part of such individuals to keep up the appearance of respect for the institutions of religion, in a professed veneration for the names and



character of the saints in the churches of antiquity; whilst at the same time they are influenced with a propensity of hostility and dislike to *living* characters, who are now "followers" of those venerable worthies, "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." This was precisely the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's day, to whom he spake in terms of strongest reprehension. Matt. xxiii. 29, &c.

Whilst the ignorant formalist is led to wrap himself up more tightly in the cloak of carnal security,—from what he may discover of inconsistency in any who have made profession of more serious godliness; the apostatising and unfaithful themselves, are not left without attempts at extenuation. They are generally ready with an excuse to justify their alienation either from God or his cause, and are very expert in attaching blame to others, and which they assign as the ostensible reason for the change which has taken place in their proceedings. But the real cause is in themselves. Sin lies at their own door. There is no palliative that is sufficient to exonerate from blame, or free from condemnation, a departure from God and the open profession of religion. And there is no possibility of restoration to the Divine favor but a coming again to God as at first. "Remember therefore," says the Redeemer, to the church at Ephesus, "from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."—But are these deluded wanderers to be neglected and treated with indifference by their former brethren? By no means. Every effort, marked by zeal and tempered with affection, should be persevering:

ly used to bring them back to the fold whence they have strayed, in imitation of "the good Shepherd" who came "to seek and to save that which is lost." "Brethren," says the apostle, "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Ardent desire for the welfare of sinners, in their conversion to God, and the restoration of backsliders to their forfeited peace, is a distinguishing feature in the character of a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ.

"The love of Christ doth him constrain,  
To seek the wandering souls of men;  
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
To snatch them from the gaping grave."

"Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" are not of unfrequent occurrence in different parts of the Connexion, when the influence of the Holy Spirit becomes so powerfully impressive as to effect considerable ingatherings to the fold of Christ. Several places in the Grantham circuit at various periods have been favored with these gracious visitations, which have added much to the increase of numbers in society, and especially to deep and hallowing devotion. At the latter end of 1834, and at the commencement of the following year, several of the societies in the circuit were visited with copious showers from on high, which distilled upon them in the dew and rain of righteousness. The society at Croxton was amongst the rest that shared in this beneficial influence. The members, from various causes, had been diminishing in number, until some were ready to fear that

God had either forgotten to be gracious, or that his mercies were about to utterly fail them. But this little hill of Zion, the Lord at length vouchsafed to visit, and which he caused abundantly to rejoice after all its depressions. Sinners were awakened,—formalists alarmed,—backsliders reclaimed,—believers quickened,—and the glory of the Lord rested upon their tabernacle. Many were brought to a sense of pardoning mercy, and a few were enabled to claim the promise,—“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” The society which consisted of thirty-five members, in this revival was more than doubled. The room, which had been rather too small to contain the usual congregation, had it been as large again, would not have been sufficiently spacious to accommodate the people who now flocked to hear the word of reconciliation. How to proceed in this extremity they were at a loss to conjecture. There was but one alternative; which was to make their case known, in a respectful manner, to the noble proprietor of the village, in the hope that he might be favorably disposed towards them, and afford them the help which, in their straitened circumstances, they so anxiously desired. This was accordingly done. And after some deliberation, he politely tolerated their request, by allowing an enlargement of Mr. Handley’s house, in the addition of a spacious room, containing, by admeasurement within, thirty-four feet by twenty-one. All hands were now set to work, and every heart being cheered in the prospect of so speedily realising the consummation of their wishes, their industrious efforts completed the erection of their sanctuary in the space of about six weeks from its commencement. The exterior of the

edifice is not exposed to public gaze; nor would a stranger, accidentally casting his eye towards the retired spot on which it stands behind, and in conjunction with, the dwelling-house of Mr. H. suppose it to be a place of religious worship. The interior however possesses an air of peculiar neatness, and has all the accommodation that is needful and desirable. Whilst led to review the circumstances which have brought about the completion of this event, much credit is certainly due to all parties concerned therein; but to God be given all the glory. And now, Lord, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

The advantages which accrue to civil society, both in towns and villages, by the full exercise of the Methodist ministry, furnish a powerful argument for encouraging it, by extensive owners of buildings and lands in the country, instead of indulging in overt acts of intolerance, by using their influence to discountenance and suppress it. Gentlemen proprietors would do well in taking this subject into their serious consideration, and not oppose the Methodists in their attempts to reform the morals of the people, but to allow them the opportunity of erecting places of worship, on some equitable tenure, when solicited to do it. This may appear to some, if not an impertinent, yet a bold suggestion, and one that is not much likely to meet with general approbation. But what reason can be adduced against it? If the Almighty succeeds with his blessing their ministrations, is it not an indica-

tion of his presence and approval? And is it right for man to refuse his co-operation with what God sanctions? Where he condescends to abide, who is the person that needs be ashamed to shew his face? But it may be objected, "Have I not a right to do what I will with my own?" True: but not independent of responsibility to God; nor in opposition, as a Christian and a British subject, to the rights of conscience, or to the spirit and the letter of religious toleration. But it is said, "There is a difference betwixt tolerating and patronising?" So there is. But when a number of individuals in a village are wishful to worship God after their own forms, and have no opportunity to do so for want of room; and when a proprietor of lands in the place refuses to allow them a small portion of ground on which to erect a place of worship, and which he might do without any temporal disadvantage to himself; what is there of a tolerant spirit in this? The fable of the dog in the manger, depicts the disposition of one who can act in this way, as strikingly perhaps, as any illustration that can be given. It is replied again, "He is not of your party, neither does he approve of your doctrines or mode of worship." Probably not: but this does not justify the refusal upon the pure principles of religious toleration; nor is it an argument sufficient to prove that their doctrines and mode of worship are wrong, unless it could be first proved that the objector's judgment is the standard of truth. "But is it required," it may be asked, "that an individual should become so far a latitudinarian as to countenance in this way, any and every party of religionists, without discrimination and the exercise of private judgment?" Not exactly so. There are

certain general principles and outlines of character which distinguish each party, and which, to an intelligent and candid investigator, will be found sufficient to guide him in the discretionary act to which he is called, of either granting the favor solicited, or of maintaining the position of entire neutrality. Do the doctrines which they inculcate tend to encourage licentiousness and insubordination, and the neglect of moral and religious duties, or to confound and disorganise the good order of civilised society? And if so, why then the helping hand which they seek should not be extended towards them. But when contrary effects are found consequent upon their exertions, to afford them countenance, for their works' sake, is commendable.

That Wesleyan Methodism is of the latter character, the scrutiny to which it has been subjected, amidst friends and enemies, for nearly now a hundred years, sufficiently demonstrates; and being such, it will justify the patronage—and not the opposition and cold indifference—it may receive, in any extent of liberty afforded, by a private individual, to the exercise of its ministry in any part of the British dominions. In the spirit of christian meekness, the whole body of Methodist ministers may say, “We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.” “We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” There is no question but that their zealous exertions have done more than any other means to tranquilise the turbulence and dis-

content of the lower orders of society in this country, and to effect that extensive *reform*,—not in politics, but in the *morals* of the people,—which has hitherto so generally secured the safety and prosperity of the nation. And who are likely, if they continue to maintain inviolate their present principles and persevere in ardent zeal, to perpetuate these blessings, and accelerate the spread of evangelical truth, until the world is covered with righteousness. And perhaps their ministry is better suited than that of any other party, to accomplish objects so important and desirable, as those of bringing sinners to be “reconciled to God,” and of effecting the disposition of “good will towards men.” The plain and pointed style of their preaching, their evident aim at producing effect, and the earnestness of the men in general who are employed as instruments in the great and arduous toil, may account in part for the unparalleled successes of the Methodist ministry. Let but a hundred of their missionaries be supported in Ireland, and they would do more in the perturbed state of that unhappy country, than a hundred regiments of soldiers, in bringing the people, in a way that is voluntary and cheerful, to subordinate themselves to constitutional laws and civil authority. The movements of a military force, and the threatening aspect of coercive plans, might probably intimidate the refractory, and awe them for awhile into submission; but the principle of contumacy still existing, like the smouldering embers of a fire, would break out again, on the least excitement, and burn with greater fierceness than before. The factious spirit that agitates Ireland, and the prevalence of discontent in England, and which press so heavily

upon both countries, can only be effectually removed by the application of the gospel lever. It is this which heaves off the accumulated load of disaffection which exists against all lawful rule and authority, and disposes the perverse will to submit to the benign government of heaven, which enjoins, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." "These things I will that thou affirm continually, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

If these statements are correct, need any gentleman hesitate to countenance in his jurisdiction the Methodists in the exercise of their beneficial ministry? And particularly to grant them the liberty,—in this age of tolerance, and when civil protection is afforded the sectaries, (as they are called) against the outrages of bigotry and wantonness,—of erecting suitable buildings in which to announce the gospel of salvation? And if they cannot, to act upon the liberal scale of the Gentile centurion, of whom it was said, by the elders of the Jews to Jesus Christ, as a reason that he should heal the servant of this military officer,—“For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue;” yet upon some scale of equitable rentage, or lease, or legal sale and purchase, as most agreeable to circumstances. But would not this be opposition to the National Church? And how would the Clergy be affected by it? From the aspect and feeling of Methodism towards the Establishment, it is justly believed, neither the church nor its clergy have much cause for alarm. When a clergyman does



not set himself in formidable array against the Methodists, he will always find them his friendly and able coadjutors in the great work of saving souls from death, and in lengthening the cords of Zion and in strengthening her stakes. And he may be thankful that there are any who are willing to share with him the awful responsibility of the cure of souls, whether it may be in direct conjunction with himself or in a separate capacity. When a spirit of envy or hostility is manifested by a clergyman towards another party of christians in the same town, who are labouring in the same cause, it is as much as to say, "I will make myself accountable at the bar of God for the blood of all the inhabitants of the place!" Awful engagement! The late Rev. Dr. Ford, was a man of an excellent and truly catholic spirit. The Methodists were much esteemed by him, and he was equally venerated by them. He used to call them his friends; and would say to them, in his figurative strain of address: "Well; there is work enough for us all to do: you are employed in sweeping on one side of the street, and I on the other. Let us do all the good we can." This sentiment of the Doctor presents a temper of mind worthy to be cultivated by all the ministers of the gospel towards each other; and especially by those who are called in the order of providence to labor in the same town. And a lesson of this kind is inculcated by the Redeemer himself. The disciples appear at one time to have entertained higher notions of their prerogatives than they were justified in claiming. Having met with a person engaged in the same work to which they had been appointed, they were led to suspect his proceedings as irregular and unauthorized because

he was not immediately of their party. And so great was their umbrage, that they even took it upon themselves to require the man to desist. Having returned from their excursion, they informed their Master of the circumstance, expecting to obtain his commendation for what they had done. John was the spokesman on this occasion. Stepping forward, he says, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

The following are the preachers who were stationed at Nottingham, during the period that Grantham was connected with that circuit.

- 1787. Jonathan Hearn, Robert Scott, George Highfield.
- 1788. Joseph Taylor, Thomas Hanby, Joseph Jerom.
- 1789. Joseph Taylor, Thomas Vasey, John Moon.
- 1790. John Moon, Miles Martindale, Richard Elliott.
- 1791. T. Carlill, W. Butterfield, J. Beaumont, T. Wood.
- 1792. W. Thorn, J. Beaumont, T. Greaves, J. Furness.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WHILST CONNECTED WITH THE NEWARK CIRCUIT.— SOCIETIES FORMED IN VARIOUS PLACES.

Newark became the head of a circuit in the year 1793, and which then circumscribed what now lies within the geographical boundary of the Newark and Grantham circuits. About this period Sutton, Barkstone in the Vale, Stathern, Plungar, and Granby were visited with occasional preaching; but some time elapsed before methodism obtained a firm hold in any of those villages. Considerable fluctuation was experienced in the society which was first formed at Sutton, and which was removed from that village to one adjoining, and thence to another. Richard Mason, of Stathern, and Mrs. Newbury, of Sutton, (mother of Mrs. Guy, of Plungar,) were the most influential of its members at this early stage of its existence. Mrs. Newbury appears to have received her first saving impressions of religion amongst the Methodists, at Bingham and Cropwell, to which places she occasionally resorted, to obtain that spiritual food with which she could not be supplied, at that time, in the parish church. Her heart, it would seem, had been opened, like that of Lydia, to receive the truth. Mr. Carlill and his Colleagues at Nottingham, in 1791, were the first travelling preachers that visited Sut-

ton. Mrs Newbury had a strong desire to realise this object: but this was not of long continuance, as the person, at whose house the services were held, soon grew weary of them, having embraced Calvinism; and as Mr. Newbury was opposed to any thing like aiding the cause, his good wife was painfully necessitated to witness the abandonment of the means from the village, without being able to prevent it. The regular preaching was now removed to Barkstone, and Mrs. N. and her daughters, Ann and Elizabeth, attended there. About this time, Miss Newbury was married to Mr. Guy, of Plungar. He was of a kind disposition, and not unfavorably inclined towards the truth, which he manifested by generally attending the preaching at Barkstone with Mrs. Guy,—who had joined the society soon after her marriage,—and to whose house, at Plungar, the preachers resorted for accommodations on their visits to Barkstone. The late excellent Richard Watson preached here at this time, on his first coming into the itinerant work, at the age of fifteen. He was sent from Lincoln into the Newark circuit, to supply for Mr. Cooper, whose state of health required an assistant. Mrs. Guy recollects how that he went with her into the village to see the sick, and the profitable influence which she derived to her own mind, whilst he pleaded with God in behalf of the afflicted. She thought him a very extraordinary youth in prayer.\*

The person at Barkstone, at whose house the

\* Mr. Watson was born February 22nd, 1781, and came into the Newark circuit in the spring of 1796. At the age of fourteen he had attained his full stature, which was six feet two inches. And his mind was as gigantic as his body, which soon began to be developed in extraordinary pulpit talents, in origin-

means of grace were held,—and whither the people resorted who were disposed to hear the Methodists from the adjacent villages,—in the year 1796 declined having them held there any longer; he also imbibing calvinistic principles. There was now no alternative; if it was desirable to retain preaching by the Methodists in the neighbourhood,—it must go to Plungar. A degree of shyness was felt about it on the part of Mr. Guy; but being somewhat pliant, through the influence of his good lady, he was soon induced to open an out-house upon his premises for the accommodation of the people to hear the word of life. Mr. Bland was the first to preach in this newly appropriated sanctuary. His diffidence, after this adventure, completely subsided, and he became zealous for the Lord of Hosts. But as yet he had not found the pardon of his sins. The time, however, was drawing near when his adoption into the family of God was happily attained. In an affliction with which he was visited, the conviction of the need he had of salvation was deepened, when he became importunate with God for mercy, and was heard in that he feared. The preaching of Mr. Jonathan Parkin was made a great blessing to his soul at this time, and through whose instrumentality he was brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with his heart unto righteousness, whereby he obtained a joyful assurance of God's forgiving love. The preaching was now removed from the granary to the house, and within twelve

ality of thought, and in profound research. And his various acquisitions were evidently subordinated to the oracles of truth, to which, in all his studies and labors, he paid the most sacred deference. He died January 8, 1833, in the fifty-second year of his age.

months, to the present chapel, which was erected in 1798, at the entire expense of Mr. Guy.\* The first impressions of good which Mr. Guy received, he attributed to a sermon which he heard delivered on a Summer's day evening, by a stranger preacher, in the lane at the back of his house. He stood leaning over the garden gate all the time, and had his attention particularly arrested. He said to his mother, after the service had ended,—who was among the group of auditors,—“Why, mother, I never heard such a man in all my life?” “Ah! my lad!” she replies, “*that* man preaches the gospel!” This reply to her son's exclamation, was uttered with peculiar emphasis, as though she also felt the word to come with power. In her younger days she had heard the gospel in the place from which she came to reside at Plungar. This sermon, to which Mr. G. had listened with riveted attention, whilst it did not lead him to a perfect acquaintance with the plan of salvation, induced in him a favorable disposition towards serious people and sacred things, and was not forgotten, nor the impression obliterated, when the gospel came into more immediate contact with his prejudices and the corruptions of a depraved heart. At the time alluded to, he was about twenty years of age. His union with Miss Newbury, and her connexion with the Methodists, paved the way to the happy results already stated.

Richard Mason was a native of Barkstone. In his juvenile years he was addicted to the prevailing

\* This chapel was enlarged, by Mrs. Guy, in 1835, and a small cottage house built adjoining; which, together with an old tenement and small paddock, are all left, in trust, on the security of the Connexion, for the continuance of the gospel.

vices of the times, and was esteemed a champion in the rustic sports of quoits, wrestling, football playing, and boxing. On his marriage with a female at Stathern, he came to reside in that village. He was then but a young man. He became, however, about that time, by some means, deeply distressed concerning the state of his soul. He regularly attended the church, and would inquire privately of the clergyman what he must do to be saved? But the directions given him in this case,—which of all others is of most importance,—were any thing but safe and satisfactory. He was enjoined to be careful that he did no harm, to receive the sacrament, and to be constant in his attendance upon the services of the church; and that by so doing, and living in honesty and sobriety, there would be no occasion for uneasiness or alarm,—all would be well at last. This advice, for awhile, Richard endeavoured steadily to follow; but without obtaining the least consolation to his wounded spirit. In this state of perplexity and distress, he was told that the Methodists had commenced preaching at Croxton. He thought he would go over and hear whether any instruction could be obtained from them as to the remedy he so much needed. When he arrived, he found the preacher, who was a young man, sitting near the fire, in the corner of the wide open chimney, waiting the time of service. The impression on Richard's mind, from the appearance of his new teacher, was not very favorable respecting his ability. After he had sang and prayed, he gave out as his text, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Richard has been heard to state, that his attention was particularly arrested by the impres-

sive manner in which the passage was uttered, and by the involuntary response of a man, under deep conviction, in the congregation, to the interrogative of the text,—“Why in *hell* to be sure.” His opinion was soon changed concerning his new guide to the attainment of happiness. He had never heard the like before. The plan of salvation was unfolded to his view,—he saw clearly what he must do to be saved,—and shortly afterwards was enabled to exercise faith on Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Being filled with joy and peace through believing, he could not refrain telling to others what the Lord had done for his soul. He soon began to exhort his neighbours to flee from the wrath to come. And even went to his native village of Barkstone also, to declare unto his old companions in sin and folly, the necessity of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. From exercising himself in this manner, he soon proceeded to take a passage of scripture and preach from it in a regular way. It was not for some years that he was brought on the plan of the circuit, although he was acting in the capacity of a local preacher. Indeed there was no plan then of the local preachers. There were but few of them in very extensive districts of country, and the societies lay wide in general from each other. The travelling preachers visited the places in a regular way, about once a fortnight; but the local preachers went where they were solicited, or could find an open door to preach the gospel, on the sabbath days. This was the case in the Newark and Lincoln circuits, down to the year 1800, if not later: and probably might be so elsewhere. Richard is considered to have been the first who preach-



ed at Sutton and Barkstone. Mrs. Guy recollects hearing him occasionally at both those places before her marriage. He was appointed the class-leader at Barkstone on the formation of a society there.

At this early part of Richard Mason's religious career, Mr. John Harston, of Croxton, and he were intimately associated. Preaching was had at different periods, and in several houses, at Stathern; but no society was formed. Mr. Parkin and Dr. Dermott have gone over from Plungar, in an afternoon, and preached out of doors, and occasionally in a house. A Mr. David Aston, of the Calvinistic or Independent persuasion, commenced preaching pretty regularly, which he continued to do for near two years, in the house of Mr. T. Wilford, who held similar sentiments, and whose place Mr. J. Harston would sometimes supply. Mr. Aston was an amiable man, and sustained an unblemished character in the world. His piety was devout, and his labours in the doctrines of the gospel were acceptable and useful. To do good, and to bring lost sinners to Jesus Christ, his efforts, in many of the villages that surrounded his residence, were zealously exerted. The three Misses Hall of Granby owe to him, instrumentally, their first spiritual light, if not their subsequent conversion. Up to the present they have held on the tenour of their way. Two of them, Mrs. Orston and Mrs. Whyman, are connected with the Methodists: the other, Miss Hall, is joined to a Dissenting community at Leicester. Mr. Aston came into this part of the country from Stratford-on-Avon, to act in the capacity of bailiff or farming-man, to a gentleman of extensive landed estates in Leicestershire. Mr. A. was considered by the steward who introduced him

to the situation, to possess superior ability for the office in which he was placed. He did not continue long, however, in this responsible occupation. Clerical prejudice and interference effected his discharge. The clergyman in the village where he resided entertained a suspicion that he was a Dissenter, and being confirmed in his opinion, from learning that he went to a meeting-house in an adjoining parish, where he was in the habit of joining in prayer,—though it was said he used to preach, which was not correct at that time,—with a few individuals who met together to worship God, after the manner which their consciences dictated, and that it was his custom to reprove persons for profane swearing and sabbath breaking;—he appealed to the gentleman proprietor against such irregularities, declaring that if such men were countenanced upon his estates, the consequence would soon be, that the churches would be emptied and the conventicles filled. The mountain was in labour. The steward received directions either to dismiss the bailiff, or require him to break off his connexion with the Dissenters. The terms were accordingly submitted to the choice of Mr. Aston. But the principles of religion which he had embraced, were too deeply rooted in him, and too conscientiously regarded, to induce him to depart from following the Lord for the sake of any worldly interest. He chose rather to suffer persecution with the people of God, than sacrifice the testimony of a good conscience. The steward perceived how the affair must necessarily end, and having a great regard for Mr. A. from the estimate which he put upon his judgment and integrity in the management of the business to which he was called,—and of which he had not failed to

remind the proprietor, but to no effect, the decree having gone forth,—decried vehemently against the instigators of the plot, and said, invectively; or, as some might interpret it, judiciously;—"I feel indignant towards the clergy of the Establishment. They are an interfering and dominant set of men. Take away their book, and they could not preach: and take away their livings, and they would not preach. As for myself I never go to hear them; and to resort to a Dissenting chapel I should be ashamed. I therefore go to no place of worship." A very frank confession indeed. But certainly not marked by discrimination, any more than by resolution to imitate the example of the man before him, whom he was called, officially, to remove from his situation. However suitable this charge might be to some of the clergy, to apply it to the whole body of them was far too sweeping. Some of the parties are now dead: but it is believed that if a similar interference were at this day to be attempted, it would meet with a very different reception. Mr. Aston, after this, met with many friends to sympathise with him, whilst thus called to suffer for conscience' sake; among whom was Mr. Guy, of Plungar, who entertained him in his house for the space of six months, when he employed himself in spiritual husbandry, in breaking up the fallow ground of men's hearts and sowing the seed of the gospel. Thence he removed to Mr. Wilford's, at Stathern, as before mentioned. After which, he went back to Stratford. He is now residing at Buckingham, where he has been for near forty years the pastor of an Independent church, much esteemed and beloved by the flock over whose spiritual interests he has been continued so long to watch.

After the means were removed from Sutton to Barkstone, and thence to Plungar, Mrs. Newbury was led to exclaim, "All these things are against me." As she had then to walk to Plungar to hear the word and meet in class, being to her, from her years, a considerable farther distance. But encouragement was shortly afforded her, in the favorable change which took place in the views of her husband. He became well disposed towards the Methodists, and seemed glad to do any thing he could to conciliate the friendship of the preachers, who were invited to his house, and with whom he would concoct plans of usefulness. And the truths they propagated, as well as their company, he now as gladly hailed. The chapel at Granby was built at the expense, and by the united contrivance, of Mr. and Mrs. Newbury, in the year 1807. It was opened by Mr. W. Henshaw, then stationed at Nottingham.\*

Mrs. Newbury was an excellent woman, and for consistency of conduct in her religious profession, was highly esteemed. Her attendance on the means of grace was truly exemplary. She resorted to them in all kinds of weather, when at a distance of several miles, and to an advanced period of life. At the death of Mr. Newbury, she came with her youngest daughter, Mary, to reside at Granby. Still she attended Plungar as usual, on sabbath mornings, to meet in class and hear preaching; and would walk back to Granby in general to dine, that she might

\* This chapel was enlarged just double its size, in the summer of 1834; Mr. and Mrs. Guy having given the ground for that purpose. Mr. W. Dawson preached two powerful sermons at the opening, in October.

be in readiness for the afternoon service in the chapel at Granby. Mrs. N. was particularly attached to Sunday morning preaching; and was careful that she consecrated the whole of the sabbath to religious exercises, beginning at an early hour in the morning. Though an *aged* female,—during the latter years of her pilgrimage,—and residing two or three miles from the place where forenoon preaching was to be had, thither she was found perseveringly to travel on foot, let the unfavorableness of the atmosphere be as it might,—“hail, rain, snow, or blow,” she was rarely found absent at the commencement of the service in the chapel, nor at the class which was met in the house before preaching. Plungar continues to retain the good old practice of morning preaching. It would be a commendation to other places were they found to imitate the example, where it would be practicable to effect it, rather than pressing all the public services into the evening of the Lord’s day. And if a sermon cannot be obtained by the members of the society in their own place of worship in the forenoon of the sabbath, they might follow the example of Mrs. N. and walk two or three miles elsewhere to hear one; and that they would profit by such a course is scarcely to be questioned.

This good woman came to her end, prepared as a ripe shock of corn for the garner of God. The closing scene of mortality was marked by heavenly composure and great serenity of mind. Death had been rendered familiar to her view: the sting of which was extracted, and she entered the dark valley without casting a lingering look behind, being consoled by the presence of her redeeming Lord, and the assurance which she had of the incorrupti-

ble and undefiled inheritance which awaited her. And where her tuneful praises are now ceaselessly offered to God and the Lamb, in concert with all the blood-bought throng, who through faith and patience have been called to inherit the promises. She died on the twenty-fourth of February, 1812, in the seventy-third year of her age. The following hymn was a favorite one with her, and which is to be found in a former edition of the Methodist Hymn Book, but which has disappeared from the present collection.

“1 Open, Lord, in great compassion,  
 Open mercy's door to me !  
 Out of mighty tribulation  
 Bring me forth thy face to see !  
 O cut short my days of mourning,  
 Quickly to my rescue come !  
 Let me suddenly returning  
 Reach my everlasting home.

“2 If thou ever didst discover  
 To my faith the promis'd land,  
 Bid me now the stream pass over,  
 On that heavenly border stand :  
 Now surmount whate'er opposes,  
 Into thine embraces fly ;  
 Speak the word thou didst to Moses,  
 Bid me, Lord, get up and die.”

The two last lines she repeatedly uttered, in the spirit of devout prayer, nearly to the last, changing a word or two,—“Speak, Lord, as thou didst to Moses,” &c.—expressive of the ardent “desire” she had “to depart, and to be with Christ.” Her funeral sermon was preached by Richard Mason, from Job xxiii. 11, 12. “My foot hath held his steps,

his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." The passage was chosen by herself, two years before her death. One day she remarked to her daughter, Mrs. Guy,—“Ann, if it should be thought advisable that any thing should be said after my decease, for the benefit of others, I have been thinking of these words as a text;” and which she then read. It has been said by those who best knew how to estimate her character, that no passage could have been more appropriately selected for the occasion.

Previously to the establishment of the means at Plungar, under the auspices of Mr. and Mrs. Guy, preaching had been less frequent and irregular. In the interval of the preachers' visits to Sutton and Barkstone, the society, and others who had obtained a relish for Divine things from the ministry of the Methodists, would resort where they could hear an evangelical sermon at other places of worship. Hence they occasionally went to Bottesford for that purpose, where, in a Particular Baptist chapel, was a stated minister. The discourses of this preacher and his coadjutors, were often highly seasoned with the peculiarities of the calvinian system. Whilst they listened to the discussion of these subjects, which were frequently enforced upon the judgment by dogmatical assertions, together with the stress which was laid upon the statement of obligation all were under to submit to adult baptism by immersion, their minds became considerably disturbed, which induced a departure, in a few cases, from methodism; and in some others to neglect the diligent pursuit of a personal and sensible reconcilia-

tion with God through faith in the atoning blood of the Redeemer. These sat down in Laodicean ease, to wait "the effectual calling." Whilst some began to look upon immersion, as an act essential to salvation; and therefore could not any longer hold either christian fellowship or charity with such as had not submitted,—or were unwilling to deny their baptism in infancy and submit—to this mode of induction to church membership. The tincture of these doctrinal prejudices, it has been shewn, had shut the door, both at Barkstone and Sutton, against methodism. And the tendency of these high notions and cramped opinions might be farther traced, in individual experience and practice, did not christian charity forbid it. Richard Mason himself had great difficulty, from his early associations with calvinism, to keep clear "of the rocks and breakers," and from being swamped in the tenets of *unconditional* election and reprobation, irresistible grace, and final perseverance. And he never was fully delivered from a tainted influence of these sentiments, which had an unhappy effect upon his mind and spirits, by which he was involved in sore and grievous temptations even to the last. He endeavoured to cut a middle way (if such there be) betwixt Calvinism and Arminianism. Whilst preaching one Sunday at Plungar, and being on his *high horse*, when he seemed to have liberty to say what he pleased, he gave the congregation an epitome of his experience and views of christian doctrine; and then summing up the evidence, as to the latter, he stated that he was neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian; but if he were to call himself by any name, it should be that of a Baxterian. On entering the house after service, Mr. Guy said to him, in a way



of humourous reproof, "I will tell you, Richard, what is a more suitable name for you than the one you have taken to yourself, and that is—a *backslder*." In regard to church discipline he paid but little respect. If he approved of the exercise of it upon others, he certainly chose a dispensation from being obligated to it in his own case, or to aid in supporting its wholesome control in the society. He was never known to meet his brethren at a local preachers' meeting, during the lengthened period he sustained the office of a preacher on the plan; and in some other matters he was equally careless. This might be owing in part to the want of a proper induction at first, and also to the distance at which he lived from the circuit town, and from Plungar where he had to attend his class. He was, however, esteemed a good man, and one who wished to be right himself with God, and to lead others in more essential things to be right also. His preaching at times was very powerful, and mostly acceptable. He maintained an upright character in the world, and aimed to preach Jesus Christ by his private walk and conversation, equally as in the pulpit. A few of the latter years of his pilgrimage were marked by great dejection of mind. The enemy of souls was permitted to thrust sorely at him. But towards the closing scene of mortality, God, in great mercy, rebuked the devil, and he fled from him. In the midst of desponding gloom, he caught a glimpse from heaven;—he was aroused to courage,—siezed hold upon his shield,—fought his passage to the skies, and scaled the mount of God. He died on the eighteenth of June, 1830, aged seventy-four.

Mr Thomas Handley, of Croxton, who is now

the senior local preacher on the Grantham circuit, was apprenticed to a carpenter, at Harlaxton. He came to reside at Redmile, and began to meet in class at Barkstone, about the time when the doctrinal agitation there had nearly convulsed the society. Before this he had wrought at his trade a short time both at Nottingham and Loughborough. When at the latter place, he had cautiously been led to hear at the General Baptist chapel. Whilst he listened to the word, the light of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" dissipated the cloud of darkness which obscured his spiritual vision. For some time he had been groping his way in the dark, and had stretched his eyeballs in vain to find the path of peace. The cross was now exhibited to his view, at the foot of which he became an humble suppliant; and where, with the apostle, he decided "not to know any thing among" men, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." At this crisis he came to Redmile, when he attached himself to the Methodists. By careful attendance on their means of grace, he soon became more fully assured of God's pardoning love to his soul. His mind, however, for awhile, was not a little agitated by the calvinian storm which drove the society from its moorings at Barkstone. He had well-nigh been drawn into the whirlpool of "the decrees," but being led diligently to ply the oar of prayer, and to unfurl the canvass of revelation,—which he carefully adjusted by the rope of candid research, held firmly by the mast of faith,—he caught the gale of divine influence, which bore him out, from the dangerous gulph, into the expansive ocean of God's redeeming love, where he found sea-room sufficient to carry him forth, in his desires and prayers and efforts, to the ends of the

earth, for the salvation of all mankind. Hitherto he has rejoiced in this liberty of the gospel; whilst it has been his privilege to see many around him made happy in the love of God by the instrumentality of a ministry which proclaims a present, a free, and a full salvation to every fallen child of Adam.

The local preachers who are recollected to have laboured on the Grantham side of the circuit, in the year 1800, and during a previously longer or shorter period, were Messrs. Roe, Mason, Harston, T. Fawcett, Daniel Isaac, and Francis Derry. The two last were called out into the Itinerant work;—the former in 1800, and the latter in 1802. Mr. Isaac resided at Lincoln when he first began to preach, and where he continued his abode until he went out to travel. But as the word of the Lord was precious even in those days, and he being intent to deal out the bread of life to the hungry soul, and being withal of the Asahelian race, he frequently took pedestrious excursions, on this work of charity, as far as Muston, a distance of thirty miles from Lincoln. When he took this journey, his route was chiefly from the city to Dry Doddington, on the Saturday afternoon, where he would preach the same night, and on Sunday morning at Muston, afternoon at Gonerby, and in the evening at Grantham: after which he walked nine miles to Caythorpe, his native village, where he staid the night at his mother's; and left the next morning for Lincoln, where he usually arrived, before nine o'clock, in time to commence his school. He had previously to his becoming serious, conducted a school at Sproxton. Mr. T. Christian and others,

..speak of being placed under his tuition, during the short time he continued to teach in that village. Mr. Isaac has been known to attribute his first and more immediate concern for salvation, to a discourse delivered at Normanton near Caythorpe, by Mr. Garves Watson, a young local preacher, from Newark, and who is now living at Retford. He joined the society at the age of nineteen, and soon afterwards was employed in calling sinners to repentance. He continued in the itinerant ministry thirty-four years. He died of paralysis, at York, on March the 21st, 1834, aged fifty-six. The general character, mental powers, and ministerial abilities of Mr. Isaac, are both strikingly and faithfully sketched in the account of him which appears on the Conference Minutes for the year 1834.

Woolsthorpe near Colsterworth appears to be the next place to those already named, in which a society was formed. This was in the year 1799. Mr. John Treadgold had come to reside in the village about four years previously, as an overseer of the turnpike road. He was not altogether destitute of religious light, having been accustomed to hear the gospel, when a youth, in his father's house, at Little Brington, Northamptonshire; and since his residence at Woolsthorpe, would occasionally hear at Skillington. Mr. Wood, of Gunby, called upon him one day to inquire if he would allow Mr. Harston to stand and preach in his yard, as the inhabitants of the place in general, he thought, were much in need of religious instruction. Mr. T. replied, that he could have no objection to the proposition; but he thought that he could accommodate him with a better place than the yard for

the purpose, by allowing him the use of the barn. Mr. H. accordingly went at the time appointed, and announced salvation in the name of Jesus, to a goodly company, assembled in the proposed building. Mr. Button, the superintendent preacher, followed in a short time, when a few individuals, disposed to serve God, were formed into a class. The preaching was continued in the barn of Mr. T. for the space of fourteen years, until it was removed to Colsterworth.

Woolsthorpe is noted for being the birth-place of the great Sir Isaac Newton. The north end of the house in which he was born, is just opposite the place which was occupied by the Methodists as a chapel. The garden of the house intervenes, where, in the retirement of the philosopher, one summer's day, as he lay basking near to an apple tree, the accidental observation of an apple falling from the tree, originated in his mind a train of reflections on the cause of so simple a phenomenon, which he pursued until he finally elaborated his grand theory of the laws of gravitation. This tree was long preserved in the garden with the greatest care, and was pointed out to the passing curious or inquiring stranger, as the identical spot where the powers of Newton opened a new field, and gave a fresh impulse to scientific research. The writer recollects to have seen the tree growing in the garden. It has become venerable from age; and had, to appearance, survived all vegetable life in its vicinity. It was extremely decayed, and nearly torn up by the roots; its trunk prostrated to the earth, and some of its almost lifeless branches supported by a few props. On viewing the garden in the spring of 1835, not a vestige of it was to be seen.

This unparalleled mathematician and philosopher, received the rudiments of classical education in the Grammar School, at Grantham. He was born in 1642, and died March 20th, 1726, aged eighty-four. He was interred in Westminster Abbey, where a magnificent monument is erected to his memory, with a Latin inscription, of which the following is a translation: "Here lies interred SIR ISAAC NEWTON, Knight, who, by a strength of mind almost divine, discovered, on principles of his own, and first demonstrated the motions and figures of the Planets, the courses of the Comets, and the causes of the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea. He also discovered the dissimilarity of the rays of light, and the properties of colours thence arising, which had not ever been conjectured by any before him. Of Nature, Antiquity, and the Holy Scriptures, he was a diligent, sagacious, and faithful interpreter. He maintained by his Philosophy, the dignity of the SUPREME BEING, and in his manners he exhibited the Simplicity of the Gospel. Let mortals congratulate themselves, that so great an Ornament of Human Nature has existed."

Mr. Wood, who has been named in connexion with Woolsthorpe, was a truly excellent man, and whose heart had been made right with God, died at Gunby, in the year 1811. Before his decease he was confined to his bed for several months by extreme rheumatism, which he bore with exemplary patience and christian resignation. The closing scene of mortality, was not only distinguished by what is usually peaceful and joyous to a sanctified believer, but was extraordinarily triumphant. The description given by Young of such a scene, was substantially verified in the death of this devout servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate  
Is privileg’d beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life,—quite in the verge of heav’n.”

It is said by those who were present when he expired,—strange and unaccountable as it may seem,—that the most melodious and heavenly strains of music were heard in the room where he lay, about the time the spirit took its exit from the body. But whence it came, and whither it went, they could not tell. Possibly it might be from the harps of attendant angels, on receiving their charge to convoy it to the blissful haven of endless rest. “Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” It is not, however, to “the music of the spheres” that the final salvation of Mr. Wood is to be adduced. “We have,” says St. Peter, “a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.” The previous conduct he pursued, and the christian graces which were exemplified in his character, are the indubitable evidences of his having entered the paradise of God.

Aslackby was next visited with the Methodist ministry. Mr. F. Derry was the first to preach there, in 1801; and was succeeded by Mr. James Ridall, one of the travelling preachers. This was in the house of Mr. John Burrows, where the means up to the present time have been continued. Twenty-seven members stand on the circuit list in 1802. Mrs. Burrows was the sister of Mr. W. Kitchen, of Skillington; at which place, amongst the Methodists, both Mr. and Mrs. B. obtained their spiritual good. Mr. B. had lived in the service of Lord Harborough. It was the pleasure of his lordship to reward the fidelity of his servant with the sole benefit of the grazing farm at Aslackby during

his life time, to the possession of which he came at the death of Lord H. in the year 1800. Mrs. Burrows was a steady and consistent member, and kindly affectionate in her disposition. The preachers were most cordially welcomed by her on their regular visits to the village, and whom she hailed as "the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ." She lived in the enjoyment of true piety, and which was her solace in death. On the 24th of June, 1817, she was called to exchange the militant church on earth, for the triumphant church above, leaving her husband and two daughters to lament their loss. The younger daughter was soon called to join her mother in a better world. The eldest is living; and to be a help and a blessing to society, to which her heart is graciously disposed, her life it is hoped will be long spared. The house of Mr. Burrows has been a kind of methodistical fort, whence the preachers have essayed in different directions to make their attack upon the territories of the prince of darkness, and to which fastness they have returned for nightly retirement and other accommodations, until a hold could be secured, in the places of encounter, for the interests of the Prince of Peace and the reception of his servants. Billingborough, Pointon, Rippingale, and Bourn are partially indebted to the emanation of the gospel from Aslackby, for the commencement of methodism and the establishment of its ordinances therein. A chapel, however, is very much needed at Aslackby; otherwise the society when dispossessed of their present fort, will be found very much inconvenienced, and probably the spiritual opportunities of the village, when that occurrence takes place, may be considerably lessened.



Billingham had a society formed in it, of twenty members, in 1802. The cause has met with many fluctuations in this extensive village, and has had great difficulty, for a number of years, to maintain the prospect of continuance. Divided interests, a want of consistency, and a defect in methodical heartiness, have seemed at times to threaten the society with complete extinction. Notwithstanding, a seed has been preserved, both here and at Pointon, and which, there is encouragement to hope, will spread and flourish, and become a praise in that part of the circuit. In the midst of unfavorable circumstances, the truth as it is in Jesus, has proved itself mighty in the conversion of a goodly number of individuals, at different periods, some of whom have finished their course with joy and obtained the prize. Among whom might be named, as old standards and kind supporters of the cause, Henry Taylor, and Ann his wife. The latter died January 29th, 1828, aged fifty-nine: the former, June 2nd, 1830, aged sixty-two.—An excellent and very neat chapel was erected in a central part of the town in the year 1829, having a gallery in front. Considerable zeal and liberality were displayed by several individuals, in different parts of the circuit, in order to accomplish this object. Mr. Redshaw, of Bourn, and Mr. W. Wright, then of Pointon, were indefatigable in their exertions; and to the taste of the latter, it is presumed, the architectural neatness of the chapel is indebted. A large and well conducted Sunday School has been supported in the chapel since the time it was built. Much credit is due to the persons who have had the principal management of it. May their zeal remain unabated, and the instructions which

they inculcate upon their juvenile charge, be exemplified by personal piety and a consistency of religious conduct.

Two chapels were built in the course of the year 1802; which are those at Muston and Skillington. The Muston chapel was opened by Mr. John Hickling. Trustees,—Rd. Guy, J. Musson, T. Handley, J. Dawn, T. Watson, J. Whyman, and T. Hickman. For the dimensions, cost of erection, and present debt of this or any other chapel in the circuit, see the Schedule of Chapels in a further chapter of this work. The chapel at Skillington is a substantial and commodious building, and was raised by the liberality of three individuals, Messrs. W. and R. Christian, and T. Berridge, and settled upon trustees, at the time of its erection, in the usual way of security to the society. R. C. Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby Hall, preached on the occasion of its opening. The pews were introduced in the latter end of 1834.

The cause of methodism, appears to have found its way to Sproxton and Saltby sometime in the year 1802; as a society is found, in each place, upon the circuit records, the following year; of nine members at Sproxton, and of thirteen at Saltby. A few years after this date, Mr. W. Kitchen, of Skillington, built a chapel at Saltby, which has hitherto been occupied by the Methodists, but which is still retained as private property. It is not, however, that Mr. K. has not been disposed to secure it to the Connexion, that it continues as it does. The society had been in a low and languishing state for several years, until in the spring of 1835 it considerably revived, when some

striking conversions took place, and the congregation greatly increased.

From particulars which have been gathered by the writer, it would seem that Mrs. Margaret Coy, and one of her daughters, were the first at Sproxton to hear the Methodists with any good effect. Miss Coy had been placed in a school at Melton; the governess of which was a pious woman, and from whose concern for the religious instruction of her pupils, Miss Coy was led to remember her Creator and to feel the importance of sacred things. On her return home, her mother was so much affected with her conversation and behaviour that she became deeply concerned for her own personal salvation. These desires and awakenings were inducements to the mother and daughter to travel in company to the preaching at Skillington to seek food for their souls, and which was not found to be in vain. Mr. Coy was much opposed to their proceedings, and in which opposition he went to a considerable length. The religious books they were accustomed to read he threatened to burn; and his design on one occasion was nearly carried into execution, but was prevented by some simple occurrence. And on their return from Skillington on a Sunday evening, they found the door more than once locked against them. But by consistency of conduct and perseverance, these difficulties were more than conquered. Mr. Coy became more reconciled; and on going to hear a sermon in the Tythe Barn from a Calvinist preacher, on an occasional visit of this minister to Sproxton, in which was pointed out the depravity of the heart, the consequences of sin, and the folly of persecutors, the arrow of conviction entered his conscience, and he was brought in penitence to the foot of the cross.

Here he bewailed his lost condition; and whilst he pleaded the mercy of God, through a crucified Saviour, he soon found the Lord to be faithful to his word,—“Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” His soul was made happy through believing. The Methodist preachers were invited to the house; and where, to the present, they have continued to be kindly entertained.

Mrs. Coy exchanged mortality for everlasting life on the 17th of November, 1832, aged seventy-two. She was a good woman, and had proved steady and consistent in her attachment to the cause of God; and was never heard to regret that she had taken up the cross, and gone without the camp unto Jesus, for whose sake she had suffered reproach. In the prospect of death she felt no evil, and she feared none. Sin had lost its power, and death its sting; the grave its victory, and hell its horrors. She possessed the happiness of which some speak, but have not attained, because they seek it not from that source whence alone it can proceed. She spake in the most satisfactory manner of her interest in the covenant of redemption, and of the unclouded prospects which she had of the crown of life, which is promised to all who love the appearing of Jesus Christ. She gave as a text, for her funeral sermon, Isaiah lv. 7. which passage she said was applied to her mind when God spoke pardon to her troubled heart, and set her soul at liberty from the bondage of sin. Her desire was, that it might be improved for the benefit of others, that the willingness there is in God to pardon and accept poor sinners might be exhibited to them, as an encouragement to forsake their sins and seek salvation.

Mr. T. Coy, jun., did not long survive his mother,

being called, whilst in the midst of life and surrounded by a rising family, to depart hence and resign the fleeting breath, on the 15th of May, 1834, in the forty-sixth year of his age. He had been brought to seek religion when but a youth, and which he had endeavoured to maintain for near thirty years. He has left a widow, (who was the eldest daughter of Mr. Rt. Christian) and eight children, together with his venerable father, to lament their loss. The instructive lessons and pious charge of a dying parent, it is hoped, will not be forgotten by his offspring. The affliction which terminated the earthly career of Mr. C. was both painful and protracted, but which he bore with much patience and fortitude, whilst he clave to God in prayer and earnest longings for fuller salvation, relying, exclusively, as a helpless sinner, on the merits of Jesus Christ for acceptance with God, and a meetness for heaven.—Several others, the fruit of the Methodist ministry, both at Saltby and Sproxton, have terminated, at different periods, the christian warfare, and have entered the courts above, where they now participate in the joys of angels and disembodied saints,—in the abodes of celestial bliss.

The village of Bottesford is large and populous, and where a society was found as early as the year 1780. But the preaching does not appear to have been long continued at that time, and probably the small society which had been raised became amalgamated with that of Muston. The preachers made a second ingress about the year 1802, as a society of twenty-one members is found there in the year 1803. For near twenty years after this Bottesford contin-

ued upon the plan ; during which period a regular and considerable attention was given to the place, but without meeting with much encouragement and success. A combination of circumstances seemed to thwart the endeavours which were used. Two of which might be named. One was, that an individual or two, whose conduct was immoral, professed a strange forwardness to identify themselves with the cause and interests of methodism in the opinion of the public. The other was, the continuance of a rich man in society, for a number of years, who was proverbially penurious. The former circumstance excited prejudice from without, against the principles and moral tendency of methodism ; whilst the latter mocked the expectations of the society, and starved the cause, in the end, completely out of the place. All were looking to this great man to set an example of liberality in the erection of a chapel, and in aid of the general means which were required to be used to maintain the interests of religion in the village. But he satisfied himself with doing little more than some of the poorest of the members, even if he did as much, independently of the contrast of circumstances. He was quite content to worship in an old uninhabited mud and stud tene-ment, which was as cold as his charity, and which stood on the north side of the town. The apathy thus manifested by this individual, produced a death-like influence upon the society, which completely paralised its energies. After various fruitless attempts at vivification, the cause of Wesleyan methodism expired at Bottesford.

The Ranters have succeeded, since the Methodists left the place, of raising a considerable interest. They have erected a neat and commodious chapel,

which is well attended, and which has connected with it a large Sunday school. This is a reason why the Wesleyans have not attempted to re-enter the village, after the second failure of their cause; not wishing to assume a position which might appear hostile to their proceedings, and especially whilst their ability continued to be put forth, and was evidently owned of God in the salvation of sinners, and the increase of scriptural knowledge. The Wesleyan Methodists wish to steer clear of the imputation of "building upon another man's foundation;" and would equally avoid any attempt to jostle the stability of a prosperous gospel ministry in any town where the population is but limited. Redmile and Barkstone, which lie in a line to the west from Bottesford, have each a chapel belonging to the Ranters; and where, as well as at Bottesford, their labours have not been in vain in the Lord.

The following are the preachers stationed upon the Newark circuit, in the interval of being separated from Nottingham until Grantham was placed the head of a circuit.

- 1793. Thomas Dunn, Edmund Shaw.
- 1794. Thomas Cooper, John Furness.
- 1795. Thomas Cooper, George Dermott.
- 1796. Jonathan Parkin, Charles Bland.
- 1797. Jonathan Parkin, John Simpson.
- 1798. George Button, John Simpson.\*
- 1799. George Button, John Brice.
- 1800. John Hickling, John Leppington.
- 1801. John Hickling, James Ridall.
- 1802. John Ogilvie, John Beaumont, William Lockwood.

\* The preachers at this time, Mr. Simpson says, were accustomed, on their way to Grantham, to preach at Normanton on the Friday night, at Muston on Saturday night and Sunday morning, at Gonerby on Sunday afternoon, and Grantham at night. Normanton is now in the Sleaford circuit.

## CHAPTER IX.

GRANTHAM MADE THE HEAD OF A CIRCUIT.—SOCIETIES  
FORMED AT WELBY AND GREAT PONTON.

The Conference of 1803, constituted Grantham a circuit town. This division of the Newark circuit, at the recommendation of the societies, was a judicious arrangement. It not only made the journeys of the preachers less distant from home, but was of various utility to the larger societies and congregations, and was particularly of advantage to Grantham. In 1802, the year before the division took place, a third preacher had been called into the circuit to afford the places, where the gospel had been recently introduced and societies raised up, a more adequate supply of preaching. And as new places continued to increase upon them, there was found sufficient work, before the ensuing Conference, to engage the labour of a fourth preacher; which encouraged the friends to attempt the division; and on being effected, placed two preachers upon each circuit. This was an important era to Grantham; and the preachers who were then appointed to the circuit, in taking a prospective glance of the territories in which they were called to exert there energies, perceived that "there remained yet very much land to be possessed," and accordingly pushed forward their enterprises.



Preparatory to the circuit being divided, the chapel at Grantham was built, and which was opened in the summer of 1803. Mr. Brackenbury preached on the occasion. To aid the cause, and give stability to the important undertaking, he was induced to abide a few weeks in the town. Being a gentleman of independent fortune, and of great swavity of manners, and one who possessed considerable ministerial ability, his influence commanded both large and respectable congregations. His countenance to methodism did much to remove prejudice from the minds of many. And by his exertions the magistrates were aroused to a sense of duty in the suppression of sabbath trading, when the shops were forthwith ordered to be shut on the Lord's day. Unhappily, however, soon after Mr. B's removal from Grantham, they relapsed into their former apathy: and by their indifference to inflict the penalty which the law awards upon such delinquency,—and in some instances by their own example,—Sunday traffic was again resumed; and which continues to the present time, to the disgrace of those whose authority it is to enjoin obedience, and to stand forth as the guardians of public morals. “I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved:” “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” “Who will rise up for me against the evil doers?”\*

\* The municipal reform which the legislature has effected, will introduce persons into civil office it is hoped, whose zeal for the suppression of sabbath breaking will be more laudable than that of their predecessors. The character of such persons, in this respect, ought to be a consideration with the religious public when their votes are solicited to fill up the vacancies in the municipal body; as also in the election of members of parliament.

The erection of the chapel cost something more than a £1000. And when it is considered that the society consisted of only forty-eight members at the time, the zeal and enterprise of the few individuals who made themselves responsible for the concern, cannot but excite the surprise and admiration of all who know how to calculate in such speculations. Their difficulties for several years were not a few. Faith and patience were put to the test; but every obstacle was surmounted, and the end has been more than realised which these worthy men were first led to anticipate. The chapel has been well filled, and every pew let, in addition to as many more which have been erected since the chapel was first built. The trustees were, George Scales, John Brown, Thos. Gillson, W. Christian, Rt. Christian, T. Berridge, John Northern, Jas. Roe, jun., G. Pinner, Rd. Eminson, Rt. Harston, J. Harston, and W. Houghton. Only one of these, the last, was resident at Grantham, and who still survives, to behold and rejoice in the fruit of his labour and that of his coadjutors, several of whom are gone to their reward in heaven.

None ought to be aided in their endeavours to be placed in such responsible offices who are not inclined to exercise the prerogative of their station in defence and support of the government of the Great Supreme. The well-being of society and the prosperity of the country materially depend upon this great question. Let such as believe the Bible, in a coming Judgment, and in a retributive Providence, weigh this suggestion, and be careful before God that they be not found abetting individuals to office who are tardy to secure to all classes of society the rest of the Holy Sabbath, which is granted them by charter from heaven, but of which multitudes are deprived by the usurpation of the *profligate* rich, and the indifference of the magistracy. Isaiah lviii. 13, 14. Ezekiel xlv. 24.

The chapel underwent considerable alterations in the year 1827, when a new trusteeship was formed. In these improvements, a new pulpit was introduced, behind which a recess and singing gallery were constructed, and on each side of this two small vestries for the purpose of meeting classes were arranged, and a tenement was built in the yard for the residence of the chapel keeper; the side galleries were also elevated, that the people who sit there and beneath them, might see the preacher to greater advantage, the large fold-door of entrance at the front end of the chapel was removed, and two single ones were placed near to the corners of the same frontage, and the middle part of the chapel entirely pewed, together with two wings of pews on the right and left of the pulpit beneath the galleries. Upon these alterations upwards of £300. were expended.—The chapel is situate in Finkin-street, leading from the High-street just opposite the George Inn. Thirty-three years have elapsed since its erection, during which period the society has gradually increased to six-fold. If in the next thirty-three years a proportionate advancement should be made, the number of members would amount to at least eighteen hundred, there being now three hundred. The possibility of this being the case cannot be questioned. But that it will be so may be doubted. The prayer of the writer is that the number may be more than realised. And what obstacle is there in the way to prevent it? Not any, except it should be found in the want of consistency with avowed principles on the part of the members of society themselves; and in their neglect to do honor to the Holy Spirit in the great work of revivals of religion, the promotion of which work properly and

*efficiently* belongs to Him. "Not by power nor by might but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "Know ye not that your bodies are a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in?"

"Holy Ghost, no more delay!  
Come, and in thy temple stay!  
Now thine inward witness bear,  
Strong, and permanent, and clear:  
Spring of Life, thyself impart;  
Rise eternal in my heart!"

"On all the earth thy Spirit show'r,  
The earth in righteousness renew;" &c.

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it in his time." "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

The village of Welby is celebrated as having been the residence and parochial cure of the Rev. W. Dodwell, to whom reference has several times been made in the course of this work. On his arrival at the place, he was then a young clergyman, having just finished his education, and taken up his degree of Master of Arts, at the university of Oxford; and when he entered upon the duties of his station with

exemplary zeal and diligence. There was, however, in his public ministrations a defect in evangelical sentiment. A judicious and pious female\* at Culverthorpe, who had been brought to God amongst the Methodists, hearing of his assiduity and rising popularity, she was induced to attend his church for her own spiritual profit. She soon discovered the defectiveness there was in his strain of preaching to lead the sinner to a proper discovery of his guilt and depravity, and thence to the provision which is made in the gospel for pardon and acceptance with God, and the renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. On the subject of divine influence, and the act of faith in justification, there was in his discourses, to the mind of this good woman, a manifest confusedness; and she resolved to embrace the earliest opportunity of suggesting to him the imperfection of his ministry. He listened to what she had to state with great candour; and at her recommendation was induced to subject his theological views to the test of the Homilies, the Articles of Religion, and the Bible. The consequence was, that it pleased God to make this investigation a means of his conversion, when he "received forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ." He perceived a marked difference betwixt his system of divinity and that of the fathers of the English Church, and which he found they so ably supported by the authority of the scriptures. Most conscientiously, therefore, he relinquished what was erroneous in his own creed, and remodeled it after the pure doctrines of the

\* Mrs. Hilton, the mother of Mr. T. Hilton, of South Witham.

New Testament, and that "form of sound words" which is contained in the Rubric of his own church. Thus it was, whilst Mrs. Hilton exhibited in striking contrast some parts of his preaching with the Common Prayer Book, that a flood of light was poured forth upon his mind which completely revolutionised and transformed his character both as a minister of the gospel and a christian professor. The motive by which he now became influenced in his religious career was, "that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." He inculcated both in public and private, and wherever he went, that men must not only be moral, but *renewed*; and that all morality and good works so called, which precede "the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; and rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, they have the nature of sin."\* Many resorted to his ministry, which was attended with many blessed effects, not only in his own church, but also in different parts of the country which he was in the habit of occasionally visiting. There was a strain of persuasive eloquence in his preaching, which was very attractive; and his discourses were strikingly descriptive and deeply spiritual. His manner of address was quite natural and easy, and his language simple and intelligible. The plainest and most illiterate of his hearers had seldom to complain that they could not understand him; whilst

\* Thirteenth Article of Religion.

the more intelligent amongst them, could not but be instructed in all the verities of religion. He was eminently spiritually minded; and in company his conversation was devout and edifying. The Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher had both occupied his pulpit and tarried at his house. Of the visits of these eminent servants of God he frequently would speak as a great privilege and high honor done to himself; whilst their character and writings were held by him in great admiration. Once, at the request of Mr. Wesley, he was present at the Conference, in company with the Rev. Mr. Pugh, of Rauceby.

The usefulness of this excellent clergyman was considerably hindered, during a great portion of the latter part of his life, by indisposition. He was, what is commonly termed, *very nervous*,—bordering on *hypochondriasis*. This infirmity incited habits of eccentricity; some of which, in the management of his domestic affairs, to his servants were irritable and vexatious, so that he was frequently changing them. The arrangement and oversight of his household concerns, were nearly or entirely reserved, with considerable tenacity, to himself; and in attending to which an over careful scrupulosity was regarded. It was not to be expected that the females, especially his housekeepers, would submit to the minutia of this interference in silence, and not speak in defence of their rights of office. The consequence was, a contention for ascendancy on both sides; one party claiming the prerogative, as master; and the other, on the ground of what was considered to belong to the station which she filled. It frequently happened that neither side would yield. Hence a separation speedily ensued. These whimsical proceedings, together with other pecu-

arities, were a stain in the character of this otherwise excellent man, which was difficult for christian charity to wipe away. From causes of this nature, many of his parishioners were prejudiced against him, which rendered his ministry unpopular, and operated unfavorably to their profiting by his pulpit labours. From the middle period to the close of his exercising the ministerial office,—notwithstanding that in his preaching he continued to retain a considerable degree of his former style of pointedness and energy,—the word which he delivered seemed to be without effect; the people in general remaining formal, and apparently quite unconcerned. Little reformation was effected by his ministry, and few souls brought to experience the power of godliness. It was as though the fine gold had become dim. In the distribution of alms amongst the poor of his parish, it was to be regretted, most assuredly, that he was not so liberal as his circumstances would have enabled him, and which the nature of his office prompted him to have been. A little attention of this kind to the wants of his neighbours, in sickness and extreme poverty, would have conciliated their esteem, and, as a consequence, prepared their minds to receive with greater cordiality the doctrines of salvation which he announced. But instead of which, they were ready to loathe the truth, because of the prejudice which they had imbibed against the man that delivered it. And many it is to be feared, from similar, or worse causes, have become gospel hardened;—a condition, let the occasion be what it may, that is particularly to be deplored and dreaded.

Whether the foibles and imperfections which attached themselves to the character of Mr. D. were



to be attributed to his "infirmity,"—and so unavoidable, which would free him from moral censure;—or to a voluntary indulgence of a wrong passion, which would involve culpability;—the reader, if casuist sufficient, and such as were acquainted with him and his manners, are left to decide. And as "by others' faults, wise men correct their own," it is hoped that these strictures will not be deemed improper, nor misapplied. The sin of old age, is said to be that of covetousness.\* Probably it might be a besetment of Mr. D. or he might be strongly tempted to it. That he was not "given to hospitality," is a fact too notorious to be denied. And that "the love of money" preponderated in his esteem, too many were ready enough to affirm. He possessed considerable property with which he might have done immense good in his own neighbourhood, during his life-time, had it not been for hesitancy, a want of discrimination, or the influence of a penurious propensity. He frequently lost money by the failure of banks, and the embarrassment of individuals, to whose disposal he had intrusted it. Having a large sum in Abraham Sheath's bank when it failed, and meeting with John Pickering, of Muston, just at the time the stoppage of payment was announced,—who also it is said had a little property deposited there,—he accosted him, under considerable emotion; "O, John, have you heard of the serious circumstance that has happened?" "No, Sir; what is it?" "Why,—Boston bank is broken! and I had so many hundred pounds in it!" "Thank

\* "This morning," says Mr. Wesley, "I preached at five o'clock; after which I saw a rare sight,—a rich old man, and yet not covetous."—*Journals*.

God," says John, "the bank of heaven is not broken; and my 'treasure and my heart are there.'" Thus did the humble cottager reprove his anxieties; and by his example the affections of the opulent rector might have been allured to brighter worlds. After he had sustained a loss of this kind, he generally preached much better for awhile, and was aroused to greater zeal and diligence in his pastoral duties, whilst his liberality was observed to become more diffusive.

As these particulars for the most part were well known to the acquaintances of Mr. D., and much spoken of amongst them, either contumeliously or by way of extenuation and regret, it probably would have been considered an unfaithful portraiture of his character had no mention been made of them. But it may be asked, Were there no prominent features of excellence to enliven the gloomy shades? and more especially the dark ground of penuriousness? A little coloring it is thought may be fairly given; and the features inquired after shall be circumstantially portrayed.—The suspicion entertained of him that he was really avaricious, cannot, it is thought, be strictly substantiated. He might be strongly tempted to it, and beset by it; but it can hardly be considered as having attained that hold upon him as to form an integral part of his character. It would seem that he held his property in a state of equipoise, not being decided whether he should retain it to himself or not, or undetermined as to the objects which had the greatest claim upon his resources. His nervous debility agitated him with many unnecessary fears; and whilst looking through this gloomy atmosphere at what might possibly happen to himself, he was led so conjecture that his own circum-

stances might become such as to demand that he should for the present be sparing. This imagination was strengthened from the recollection that he lived in a diocese where the diocesan had not been very courteous towards some clergymen who held evangelical sentiments similar to his own, and on which account they had lost their cure. And, at different times, some of his parishioners had ill requited his kindness; and the general indifference which they manifested towards the great object for which he laboured, in the improvement of their morals and their conversion to God, were circumstances of consideration with him; and to a nervously susceptible mind like his, it was not unlikely that they should operate upon his prejudices against them. His judgment and his wishes might be in favor of benevolence, in the application even of his own property; but his fears and hesitancy caused the opposite scale to preponderate. And yet there were seasons when his gifts were looked upon as generous, if not profuse. He has been known to lay upon the plate, at a collection, £5. for three successive times in one day, and to advance £10., £20., and occasionally even £100. at once, to religious and charitable institutions. From such advancements as these will any denounce him a covetous man? If so, why then the church is overrun with idolatry. And if this evidence is not sufficient to substantiate what is here attempted to prove, that avarice was not an incentive and deeply rooted principle in his character, an act of liberality which he performed towards the close of life, will sufficiently demonstrate that if it had existed he had conquered it, and that it had no ascendancy over him when he was about to leave this world for another. In taking a prospective and retro-

spective view of his condition as responsible to God for the application of his property, which, as a talent, had been committed to his charge; instead of being satisfied with what he had done, he was not without apprehensions that when his accounts were investigated by his Lord and Master, at the tribunal to which he was drawing near, he might be found an unfaithful steward. The scale, therefore, which had only slightly drawn in favor of benevolence, and which too frequently in appearance, if not actually, had been outweighed by penuriousness, was made to come down with preponderating force, by casting into it nearly all that he had; and thus making restitution to charity. To the Wesleyan Missionary Society, he presented, by deed of gift, TEN THOUSAND POUNDS; and to the British and Foreign Bible Society, he gave an equal sum. He also bequeathed £3317. 3s. 1d. to the poor of the parishes of Stoke and Welby, payable at three per cent; out of which £50. a year was deducted for the support of two charity schools in the said villages for the education of poor children. £15. to each school go towards instruction, and £10. to apprentice a boy to a trade. These sums, with the exception of a few small legacies, comprised thereabouts the entire of his earthly possessions. He ranks, by these munificent gifts, a subscriber of more than a thousand pounds yearly, and *for ever*, in support of charities the most beneficial and humane. His conduct herein will bear inspection; whilst, according to circumstances, it reminds the reader of his responsibility to the same Master, who is Lord of all.

His death took place very suddenly; although he had become extremely weak and feeble for some years previously. He lies interred in Welby church-

yard, on the south side of the chancel. The following inscription on his tomb-stone, by the Rev. Joseph Hugill, records his memory :—

**Here rest**

THE MORTAL REMAINS OF THE

REV. WILLIAM DODWELL, A. M.,

Rector of WELBY & STOKE,

Who departed this life on the 13th day of JUNE, 1824,  
aged seventy-three.

He discharged the Pastoral Duties of this Parish, with  
Zeal and Faithfulness, for nearly half a century.

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Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the  
Lord revealed? *Isaiah liii. 1.*

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Lo! the prisoner is released,  
Lightened of his fleshly load:  
Where the weary are at rest,  
He is gathered into God!

Lo! the pain of life is past,  
And all his warfare now is o'er:  
Death and hell behind are cast,  
Grief and suffering are no more.

---

Omnes una manet nox.  
Et calcanda semel via lethi.

Mr. Dodwell was rather low in stature, but well proportioned, and walked very erect. His appearance was venerable and interesting; his countenance was comely, and his eye prominent and piercing. He had a fine head of hair, the snowy locks of which bespoke his lengthened years. He was altogether an engaging figure; and very generally, when in company with his friends, he would display considerable pleasantry and humour. But he had the misfortune never to be married. Had this event taken place, at a suitable period in life, it

might have added much to his happiness, and been of advantage also to others. Many of his domestic whims may be attributed to this circumstance. There was a time when he was about to have been tied with the nuptial bonds, but from some inauspicious influence, the affections of the young lady were transferred from the rector to his curate; and to whom she was shortly afterwards married. From this untoward transaction it does not appear that he ever attempted to form a similar alliance.

The only productions of his pen, which have issued from the press, are, two Sermons which were inserted several years ago in the Methodist Magazine, one on the Authenticity and Divinity of the Holy Scriptures; the other on the Nature and Eternity of the Torments of the Wicked:—A short Body of Divinity; the manuscript of which was given to the author of this sketch, who published it on his own responsibility:—A Paraphrase on the Book of Psalms, which Mr. Dodwell published himself:—And a Paraphrase on the New Testament, which was edited and published by Mr. Hugill, after the decease of the author.—Mr. H. was curate of Welby for the space of fifteen years, up to 1834, and who was much respected and beloved by the inhabitants of the village, for his assiduity, ministerial abilities, and amiable manners; and to whom, as an expression of their esteem and attachment, they presented a silver cup on his labours terminating among them.

The Methodists did not attempt regular preaching and the formation of a society at Welby until 1803. Some of the preachers had occasionally visited the village at the invitation of Mr. Dodwell,

and at whose request they preached in his house; and where prayer meetings were held on a Sunday morning, by the pious people, after the manner of the Methodists. When Grantham was made the head of a circuit, and preachers became resident there, they were solicited by some of the more serious part of the inhabitants at Welby to take the village upon the plan, and supply it with regular preaching in a methodistical way, which was accordingly done, and a small society formed. This had the appearance of entering a little into collision with Mr. D., and was a step which excited in him a degree of jealousy, but without making any serious breach of friendship. But what could be done? His active zeal had begun to abate, and his health did not allow him to preach more than once on the Sabbath. Besides, to be accommodated with his house was optional with himself, and always precarious. His fears were also excited, either by the real or imaginary frowns of the bishop, by which he was kept in a state of jeopardy. The people cried out for more help; and for that kind of help to their souls which they were aware the Methodist ministry and discipline could afford them. It would therefore have been a forfeiture of sacred trust to have denied them the assistance which they craved.

There have been three or four private houses in which there has been preaching since the commencement. For the last twenty years the public services have been held in the kitchen of Mr. W. Watson,—a son of the Mrs. Watson, (afterwards Mrs. Chester,) who has previously been named as the aunt of Mrs. Berridge, and of Messrs. W. and R. Christian, of Skillington. Mr. and Mrs. Watson are amongst the first members of the society. Their steady and

consistent attachment to the interests of the cause, and the kind attention which they have invariably shown to the preachers who have visited their house, are reasons for the esteem in which they are held by the messengers of peace who have had the opportunity of a personal acquaintance with them. They have had a numerous offspring; some of whom have been brought experimentally to "know the God of their fathers:" and those of them who may yet remain strangers to the covenant of promise, have not to attribute their ignorance of vital religion, to a want of solicitude and attention on the part of their parents. The spiritual interests of the society have met with fluctuations. At different periods the cause has been graciously visited with revivals; but from one circumstance or other, the number in society has occasionally diminished. A gracious and extensive influence was realised at the commencement of 1835, which added to the society upwards of twenty individuals, principally young persons. May they be found faithful. Mr. Joseph Wilkinson is the class-leader, and whose zeal for the spiritual interests of his charge, has hitherto been such as is highly commendable.

The village of Great Ponton, which lies four miles south of Grantham, has been of notoriety for doctrinal antinomianism, the particulars of which shall be detailed as the state of methodism in the town is narrated. A society was formed sometime in the year 1803, but there had been occasional preaching in the place since the autumn of 1802. To the pious influence of Miss Frances Shepherd, (now Mrs. Harris) the introduction of the Methodist cause into Ponton, may be chiefly attributed.



She had resided for some time at Nottingham ; and whilst there had found, amongst the Methodists, "the pearl of great price." Having renounced the vanities of the world and all sinful indulgencies, and chosen the Lord as her portion, she immediately united with the society, which was in 1800, the year in which Messrs. Pipe and Bramwell were stationed at Nottingham, from the former of whom she received her note of admission. Her views of religious truth were clear, and her attachment to the people of God, from whom she had instrumentally derived so much spiritual profit, was strong and ardent. On her return to Ponton, excited by love to the Saviour and to the souls of sinners, she felt anxious that others should partake with her of the joys which she had so graciously realised. The influence of religious truth on her mind constrained the exclamation,—

"O that the world might taste and see  
The riches of his grace ;  
The arms of love that compass me,  
Would all mankind embrace."

The celestial fire on the altar of her heart, ascended in a flame that was even and steady ; whilst to the principles of religion which she had professedly embraced, she firmly adhered with undeviating constancy. A sad deterioration from this example of consistency, she was painfully called to witness in many others, in after years ; concerning whom, she, and a few of her faithful companions in tribulation, had reasons to hope better things. Indecision, a bitter spirit, and in some instances, profligacy, were consequences in a society which presented an aspect

of great spiritual prosperity, and which originated in the attempts of an influential person who was "given to change."

On Miss S's return to her native village, she was constrained to witness amongst her friends what the Lord had done for her soul; and strove, both by precept and example, to induce them to "flee from the wrath to come." It pleased God to awaken, by this labour of love, a few individuals to a concern for their spiritual welfare. With these persons she took occasion to meet for serious conversation and social prayer, and who gladly accompanied her to Grantham or Skillington to hear the gospel.

It now became desirable to introduce preaching into the village, which was in a state of extreme darkness as to divine things, for none had hitherto seemed to care to save their souls. Mr. W. Lockwood had just come into the circuit. He was a young man full of zeal and of great courage. He was requested to engage in the enterprise of preaching in the street at Great Ponton; when, without hesitancy, he proceeded to the duty, in attendance with several friends from Skillington. Satan seemed not to be disposed, however, to remain in a state of neutrality at this daring attack made upon his kingdom, and therefore marshalled his subjects in formidable array to resist the attempt which was thus made upon it; which was likely, as he might perceive, to induce his servants to depart from his employ, and to subjugate them to the authority of the Prince of Peace. Clods, stones, rotten eggs, and other weapons of defensive and hostile warfare, such as are not unfrequently used by those who are engaged in a bad cause, were plentifully hurled on the occasion. But notwithstanding this bold resistance, the

word of the Lord was not without effect. Several were pierced to the heart by the arrow of conviction; and were led to throw off the works of darkness and put on them the armour of light. A house was opened for prayer meetings, where the slain of the Lord might resort to be healed. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Dickenson had his house licensed for preaching, and the means of grace were regularly introduced. A society was now formed, and the cause assumed stability. But violent and daring were the acts of opposition. Brickbats were thrown through the windows, and so incessant were the sallies of these sons of ignorance and wantonness, that scarcely a pane of glass was left entire in any of the windows of the dwelling-house. Several hair-breadth escapes from mortal injury are recollected to have been experienced by several of the friends. By way of wanton sport and derision, the effigy of the friend at whose house the means were held, was carried about the streets, then gibbeted, and afterwards burned. But Benjamin Dickenson was of a different temperament of mind than to be intimidated by menaces of this kind. He had sat down and counted the cost, and having had his face directed towards Zion, he was not to be persuaded to change his purpose. Various have been the vicissitudes of this good man's life: but in the midst of all, justice is due towards him to narrate, that his character has ever been marked by kindness and generosity; and whilst, for a series of years, he was esteemed a great man with his master,\* and stood exposed to many temptations, it is believed that he was not known to compromise his religious

\* The late Lord Huntingtower.

principles to the fear of frowns, or to gain emolument. At his house the messengers of peace and salvation always met with a cheerful welcome. In the decline of life adverse circumstances have befallen him. Domestic trials in succession have caused his depressions; and which, probably, originated in an extreme of fraternal indulgence. It is hoped that now in the winter of life, and whilst called to endure comparative adversity, he will not find the promises of God to fail him. Were the scenes of his eventful life to be accurately drawn, there would be found much both to amuse the imagination and affect the passions: but none, it is presumed, besides himself would be adequate to sketch the outline and give to the picture its proper colours.

It is found difficult to delineate the state of religion in this place. The Methodist society, at its commencement, it may be said, was "rocked by the tempest and cradled in the storm." If "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church" in primitive times, the persecutions of the Ponton sons of Belial only tended to awaken conviction for sin in the breasts of many, and to confirm others in a more fixed determination to follow on to know the Lord. After a few years the missile opposition subsided; but only to the introduction of another kind of hostility, which proved more injurious to the prosperity of methodism and the interests of scriptural piety than the former. Satan, as though aware that the number of his subjects was diminishing through the repeated failure of those violent sallies from his citadel upon the camp of Immanuel, declined that mode of warfare, and attempted to maintain his cause by subtlety, which he found he was not capable of doing by violence. The curate

of the parish, there is too much reason to fear, became a dupe to his artifices. The circumstances of the case are too prominent to be passed over without notice; and however reluctantly the writer may enter upon the task of delineation, for the sake of truth and righteousness he feels it his duty to do so. This clergyman on coming into the neighbourhood of Grantham, which is upwards of thirty years ago, and taking upon himself the cure of souls, pursued a line of conduct every way the reverse of what a country curate and ambassador of Christ ought to be,—an humble and devoted follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, who was employed in going about doing good. He was much disposed to indulge in the sports of the field. He had his dogs and his gun, for recreation; whilst, in his general demeanour, he assumed an air of arrogance, self-conceit, and pomposity; and he appeared to consider it an act of great condescension to afford any person, beneath his own dignity, an affable audience. Both his manners and spirit were such as to present a natural temperament of mind, at once the most unfavorable on which for the Spirit of God to operate, in order to effect a character suited to the awfully responsible situation which he filled. But what obstacles are there in the way to salvation, that may be found in the depraved heart of man, which the omnipotency of the Holy Spirit cannot overcome? The towering looks of this aspirant were brought low, and his ambitious projects levelled with the dust. He became a faithful pastor and indefatigable labourer in the Lord's vineyard. He breathed the true spirit of the gospel, and was a most successful evangelist. Many seals were added to his ministry, which were his credentials to the sacred

office. The moral reform and renovation of heart which he had experienced himself, he sought to effect in others; and his labour was not in vain in the Lord. The conversation, private walk, and public conduct, which were regarded by him at this time, are still vivid in the recollection of many. Having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ with his heart unto righteousness, with the mouth he made confession unto salvation; and delightfully interesting and profitable were the admonitions and pious councils which he gave, both to the young and aged, in his rounds of pastoral visitation.

“He try’d each art, reprov’d each dull delay,  
Allur’d to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

In the pulpit he was a boanerges. His appeals to the consciences of sinners were powerful and overwhelming; and many a stout-hearted veteran in the kingdom of Satan, was made to fear and tremble under his thundering eloquence in the application of truth. To spare himself did not seem to enter into his calculations. In addition to his regular duties of the sabbath, he established week-night lectures both at Ropsley and Ponton, as well as Sunday evening services alternately in each parish. The churches were frequently crowded with vast numbers, who flocked to hear the word of life from his lips. This laudable zeal to snatch poor sinners from a yawning hell, brought upon him a considerable share of that obloquy, reproach, and opposition which the Methodists had then to endure. The church was occasionally assailed by the wicked rabble, and the windows broken. But for several years he faithfully maintained his ground in defiance of persecution, or of what might be imputed to his

conduct, by the authorities of the church, as encouraging irregularities. He was remarkably intent upon the suppression of vice and immorality in the villages connected with his ministry; and to effect which he had recourse to the legal enactments of the country. The infliction of the law was levied upon sabbath breakers, drunkards, and profane swearers; so that sinners who dared to trample upon the authority of God, in a wanton and profligate manner, were deterred from it through fear of the penalty awarded by the civil magistrate. And this was commendably done, after pastoral reproofs and admonitions had failed of success, that incorrigible delinquents might not corrupt others by their shameless example. How well it would be were all clergymen, (who are supported by national enactments,) to exert a similar influence in their respective parishes.

The conversion of the Rev. Mr. ——— is said to have been principally owing to the faithful admonitions of a member of the Wesleyan society at Ponton, to whose house he occasionally resorted. It was rather singular that he condescended for this individual to address him on the subject of religion, —a subject with which he thought himself much more conversant than the person who had dared to correct him. But so it was. Whilst he listened to the religious experience of this person, which was stated in an artless manner, his mind became evidently affected. At times he would start objections and propose questions to what was advanced, as though he struggled to get rid of the convictions which had fastened upon him; but he found a competitor in argument beyond his ability to withstand. The net of truth was cast; in which he became entan-

gled; the meshes of which he could not break, and by force of painful conviction he was drawn in penitence to Calvary, where he found redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. His adoption into the favor and family of God, was a consequence of the faith he was enabled to exercise on a crucified Redeemer; and by this gracious process, being made a child of God, "God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying Abba, Father." To this experience he often bore testimony, as many can witness who are now living; and the subsequent fruits of the change, as previously detailed, are evidences sufficiently demonstrative of the correctness of his own testimony that he was a subject of the saving grace of God. Happy would it have been for him, and for hundreds, no doubt, as well, had he held on the even tenour of his way. But, alas! a sad retrograde in sentiment took place. By some means he was led to embrace the hyper-calvinian notions of unconditional election and reprobation, which he soon began to preach with all the vehemency and rant it is possible to conceive. The Methodists, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy and friendly alliance, became the objects of vituperation and derision in his public discourses. He held them up as the most despicable of religionists—as wolves in sheep's cloathing—as more to be dreaded than Satan himself—as propagating doctrines directly subversive of grace and salvation. He adopted a line of conduct that was calculated most effectually to destroy the good which had been extensively promoted, and in which he was so conspicuously and honourably instrumental. He would fain have persuaded himself and others, that he was doing God ser-



vice by hunting down the poor "Arminians." And with many he was too successful in accomplishing his purpose. When he began publicly to avow his change of doctrinal views, and privately to malign the sentiments of Arminius and Wesley, there were between fifty and sixty members, and candidates for membership, in the society at Ponton; which number was reduced, in a short time, to eight or ten: besides the deleterious influence which his sentiments had upon the minds of great numbers who sat under his ministry, as they had been accustomed to listen to him as an angel of light, and to pay deference to his judgment in what relates to religious faith and practice. Such was the ascendancy he had gained over them, that the most absurd opinions advanced by him were admitted on their part as sound theology and christian verities. This sad consequence originated in the influence of his former popularity, which had seduced their minds from the standard of truth, and left them ignorant of the scriptures, whereby they fell an easy prey to deception, which stole upon them unawares, and as it were by guile.

The double-distilled alcohol of antinomianism, with which they began to be supplied, was also received by the wavering, the half-awakened, and the backslider in heart and life, as a most delectable cordial, and was drank with eagerness. And some, of whose real conversion to God there was scarcely any question, from that implicit dependance which they placed upon the judgment and sincerity of their spiritual guide, it is to be lamented, allowed themselves to be conducted into the torrid regions of "the horrible decrees." In this pestiferous clime, and where they were brought to indulge in a vitia-

ted taste for this alcohol aliment, they sank rapidly from a state of spiritual health into great langour and debility, whilst their moral constitution in general became extremely morbid.

From the manner of this assailant, in his attacks upon the Methodists, and the spirit by which he was influenced,—as shone forth in his gesticulations and style of address, and when contrasted with his former demeanour,—it was too evident to admit of doubt, that he had “fallen from grace.” Under the influence of some temptation, he had proved himself unfaithful; and unhappily fell into that state against which his divine Master had cautioned him, equally with others who are found to walk in the light: “Take heed,” says he, “lest your light become darkness; how great is that darkness.” If, in his better state, he was tinctured with the peculiarities of calvinism, having lost ground in his soul, the road to “*once in grace always in grace*,” became easy of access. And as a drowning man to save his life, it is said, will catch at a straw if near him; he, in like manner, to support the sinking hope of eternal life, seized upon the straw-like hypothesis of “final perseverance,” whilst indulging in a temper of mind at variance with the gospel. His natural disposition, which was manifest previous to his conversion, evidently gained ascendancy over him; and although directed in another channel, displayed the turbulence of an insolent and dominant spirit, which was strikingly developed in his ministerial harangues. Having lost the moral ability to respire the pure atmosphere of the gospel, which is diffusive of God’s universal love to lost mankind, for the sake of consistency in defence of the principles he had embraced, and to keep up appearances as a

minister of religion, he found himself pressed to say something; hence, his discourses were chiefly made up of raillery, invectives, and sarcasms, which were often delivered in the bitterest acrimony against the opinions and motives of others whose creed differed from his own. The pulpits of those sacred edifices which he occupied, were made the vehicles of traducing some of the holiest and most useful of the ministers of Christ; and of other individuals who did not choose to admit his dogma, but to adhere to the doctrines of those ministers who were the objects of his vituperation.

His expressions would frequently enter the very precincts of blasphemy. He would vociferate, as can be testified both by eye and ear witnesses, in strains like the following:—"No Arminian can ever get to heaven; for the Arminians both preach and teach a conditional salvation:" and which he would utter under emotions of temper that gave evident marks of wrathful spleen; and with a contumelious look in the face of some Methodist whom he might select in the congregation. And, excited by the same impetuous spirit, he would assert, without hesitancy, that both Wesley and Fletcher were in hell! And that if John Wesley was in heaven, he had found a way thither with a lie in his right hand! This gentleman has had many resemblers and imitators of his character and conduct, but few who have equalled him in ability to do mischief. The spirit and sentiments of some of whom, have been kindred to his own: whilst there have been others whose practice and temper were of better quality than their principles. Through ignorance, the latter have entertained wrong views of the character of Mr. Wesley, and of the religious motives

which actuated him. And he appears to have known how to discriminate betwixt the two classes of his calumniators in his day. Towards those whose judgment might be misinformed in reference to himself, but of whose sincerity towards God he had no just reason to doubt, Mr. Wesley cultivated a charity of the purest kind, whilst towards his bitterest opponents he was never known to return railing for railing, nor to indulge in resentful feelings; and it might be well, could the few who are disposed to deal in ribaldry in modern times, be influenced to take a lesson from his example. On his last visit to York, which was in 1788, he gave an evidence of the christian charity he invariably cultivated towards those who differed from him in some points of theology; and which displayed at the same time the perception he had of what properly constitutes essentials and non-essentials in religion. He mentioned from the pulpit, that Mr. Brown, of Haddington, on his death-bed, in reckoning up the mercies of God, acknowledged his having kept him from "following that man of sin," John Wesley. "So he expressed himself," said the venerable preacher: "but," added he, rubbing his hands, and looking upwards, "I hope to meet John Brown in heaven, and join him in the praises of God and the Lamb."

The consequences resulting from the labours of the Antinomian ranter at Ponton, were, as might be expected, that in a short time the more discriminating part of the inhabitants were wearied of hearing him, which induced a gradual retirement; whilst the Methodists were driven from the church: and others, who were led to embrace the notion that necessity determined the condition of men, became

indifferent as to whether they resorted to a place of worship or not;—if they were to be saved, they should be saved; or, if destined to be lost, no effort of their own could possibly prevent it. This reasoning, deduced from the premises laid down, was quite conclusive; and became a source of gratification to some, who were glad of a pretext to indulge in sin. The church after awhile was nearly deserted, when the clergyman, from some cause, left the cure of Ponton, and had his ministry confined to the church of an adjacent village, where he had but a small congregation, with the exception of a number of persons from some of the surrounding parishes, whom he had proselyted to his predestinarian opinions. In the end, he completely preached himself out of breath. He retired from his curacy, and abandoned the work of the ministry altogether, and engaged in the cultivation of a farm. But as “the frowns of fortune” attended him, he quitted his new enterprise to retire into comparative obscurity, at some considerable distance from his former scenes of life, and where probably he now resides.

It was “an end devoutly to be wished,” that he had maintained the character as described of him in the middle part of his ministerial career, doing the work of an evangelist; and that he had perseveringly regarded the holy emulation, which at that time inspired him, to “beat down Satan” and to win souls to Christ;—an emulation which was not dissimilar to that of the apostle of the Gentiles when he exclaimed, “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” The recollection

of his character and usefulness at the period alluded to, still endears the memory of him to several persons in the Grantham circuit, who rank amongst the more esteemed members of the Wesleyan society, as from his lips they listened to those truths which first impressed their minds with deep concern for salvation. Whether they will appear or not, in the day of God, as a crown of his rejoicing, must be left for eternity to determine. Circumstances of character will issue the event. It is known who has said, "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." Of the adroitness, however, of some to neutralise the legitimate sense of this and similar passages of holy writ, the Methodists are not ignorant. But is there no danger of wresting certain portions of the word of God from their proper position, and of forcing a construction upon them which the Holy Ghost never intended? And when this is done with design to mislead, and to lower the standard of Christian morals, and limit the efficacy and extent of the grace of God,—although the primary object for so doing may be to support a favorite hypothesis,—are not the persons, by such attempts to "wrest the scriptures," liable to do it "unto their own destruction"? No wonder, therefore, that "for this cause God should send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

It is passing strange that those who were Wesleyan in sentiment at the commencement of their religious profession, and thence drawn into the

slough of antinomianism, by the bold and daring dogmatism of this clergyman, do not suspect the safety of their condition, and use means to make their escape, seeing that their guide has doubted and denied the validity of his call to preach the gospel. If he had no authority in the pulpit, why then, those who embraced the principles which, from that sacred place, he so sedulously enforced, and which were so contrary to the doctrines they had previously heard inculcated, have some cause to fear lest Satan had transformed himself into an angel of light: and having, first, by his wiles and subtilty, as "the deceiver of the brethren," gained ascendancy over the passions and judgment of the shepherd, he then obtained more readily, by means of the shepherd himself, an entrance into the fold, and where, by whose agency also, he made havock of the flock.

In the three churches which he severally occupied, the leaven of hyper-calvinism was plentifully cast, and has diffused an influence amongst the inhabitants of those villages and adjacent parts of the country, to a considerable extent. But it is believed that it will not operate to the degree of the literal leaven in the parable, so as to leaven the whole lump. The tendency of truth is to "purge out the old leaven" of error; ill-will, and all that is hostile in man to the perfect love of God and that of his neighbour. And to effect a good like this, a tenacious adherence to the doctrine of unconditional reprobation to everlasting misery, and of election to eternal life, is quite incongruous.

It is not, however, to persons holding the doctrine in question, that the writer entertains any antipathy; but to the doctrine itself, he must confess that

he feels irreconcilably hostile. From deep conviction, he is persuaded that it is at variance with truth; and the jarring notions it embodies, together with the vehement manner in which they are propagated, he more than suspects, have proved stumbling-blocks to multitudes in the way of salvation and usefulness. The case at Ponton and the neighbourhood is sufficient proof. It may be shown, without fear of rational or scriptural contradiction, that the reprobation of any to hell torments from eternity,—effectual calling,—irresistible grace in the elect,—that Christ has fulfilled the requisitions of the moral law for his people, so as to free them from positive obligation to regard it,—and that a person may be a child of God, and at the same time living in adultery, drunkenness, or the indulgence of any other immorality,—are notions quite superfluous of the doctrines of divine revelation, and altogether gratuitous on the part of those who hold them. That those who tenaciously adhere to these sentiments, and are nevertheless in a state of personal acceptance with God, their attainment of the Divine favor is not to be attributed to a belief of these extraneous opinions; but by coming to God precisely in the very same way, and by believing the very same truth, as pointed out and advocated by the Methodists; and, in fact, to which all, of any party, must have submitted, who are in reality the children of God. All are alike involved in sin. The way to God for mercy, is that of penitence and contrition, from a sense of sin, in connexion with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is the truth that they believe? It is that Jesus Christ died for *my* sins, even for *mine*,—individually. It is a faith which appropriates the merits of the death of Christ



to the soul of him that exercises it. And whence is it that *any* sinner derives authority to believe that Jesus Christ died for him? Only from the scriptures. And if he dare to venture his soul on that evidence for pardon and acceptance with God, why not another do the same? And why should not all be invited and encouraged to make a similar venture? Surely not because it is not written, that Jesus Christ "by the grace of God tasted death for every man"? Let the Antinomian therefore be careful that he "destroy not him with his meat" of deleterious doctrine, "for whom Christ died." When persons who have been enlightened and awakened under the Methodist ministry, but fall short of conversion, from an unwillingness to give up all iniquity, are pleased to take offence at the doctrines because of their uncompromising attack upon sin, and go over to the Calvinists, (which many in these parts have done,) what do they gain by it? Not a safer road to the attainment of the love of God. But it is to be feared they relinquish the pursuit of the wheat to satiate themselves upon the chaff. And now they condole themselves with the flattering notion that they are "the elect people of God," because they have embraced the peculiarities of a calvinian creed. That there are others among them in more favourable circumstances it is admitted. Such are those who have approachéd God in sincerity, and by an act of faith in "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," have been translated out of the kingdom of Satan into that of God's dear Son, and thereby made partakers of peace and joy and righteousness. The conduct of these believers exceeds the calvinistic peculiarities contained in the creed which they profess to hold.

But such peculiarities, let it be observed, do not in any degree subserve the safety of the state of those who admit them; neither do they tend to the glory of God in accelerating the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

The great error of "the decrees," as deduced from the epistle to the Romans, originates in the misapplication of figures which the apostle uses to illustrate God's manner of dealing with particular nations or communities, as to the time of calling them by the gospel, and of extending to them by that means, a higher degree of responsibility with greater advantages of spiritual improvement. And thus the mere figures themselves have been construed into doctrines of the most monstrous kind; and what solely relates to time, is applied to eternity; and to individuals, what belongs to nations. The drift of the apostle's argument evidently is to oppose the very doctrine which the Calvinists labour to deduce from it. The Jew wished to monopolise the blessings of the gospel to the exclusion of the Gentile. The Pharisees in general were the great opposers of the gospel; and it is too evident to be doubted, that in religious principles they were decidedly predestinarians. Many of whom, on coming to the baptism of John, that bold and daring reformer, unaccustomed to palliate with sin, addressed them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." The prevalency of this sentiment was so strong, that it became an insuperable barrier to the spread

of the gospel and the reception of salvation, to any great extent among the Jews. When Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch preaching the gospel, the Jews, when they found that tenders of salvation were indiscriminately made to the Gentiles as well as to themselves, had their ire very much aroused, insomuch that "they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." See Acts xiii. 38—52.

The scope of argument in the epistle to the Romans evidently goes to establish the doctrine of General Redemption. The apostle shews, 1. The total depravity of the human race, through the transgression of the first man. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." 2. That the death of Jesus Christ was a vicarious offering to God for the sins of the world. "Who died, the Just for the unjust to reconcile us to God." 3. That justification or pardon is not of works, but through the instrumentality of faith. "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," 4. That saving faith is always productive of holiness both of heart and life, and never acts in opposition to the moral law as a rule of conduct. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. iii. 31.—vi. 1, 2, 14—8.—viii. 3, 4.) 5. That none are excluded an interest in the covenant of redemption, and that God wills the salvation of all men; which is made clear, "that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." This is the main point at issue. The salvation of *any* originates in mercy, or grace, or favor. Therefore the design of God to save many, or all, does not detract from grace, by this transfer of it from the sup-

position of its being designed but for a few. The apostle asserts that the purpose of God was to make but one fold under one Shepherd; and more apparently and emphatically so under the gospel dispensation, that all distinctions should cease under Messiah's reign, when Jew and Gentile should be initiated into the same common privileges, "for God is no respecter of persons." To prove that God had thus elected the Gentiles, and that their election should stand independently of the bigotry of the Jews, who declaimed against it, and willed that it should be otherwise, the apostle refers to the choice or election of Jacob in preference to Esau,—for reasons best known to the Almighty, and as both of them could not possibly share in that particular favor,—through whose line the Messiah should come, notwithstanding Isaac *willed* that Esau should be the honoured progenitor of the illustrious Prince of Peace, according to the flesh, and in opposition to Esau's *running* to fetch venison, and bringing it with all possible speed to his father, to obtain the blessing. "So then," the salvation either of Jew or Gentile, "is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." This is simply the key by which the whole of the mystery of election and reprobation, contained in this epistle, may be unlocked.

How commendable it would be, were persons that make pretensions to religion, to submit to the gracious method of salvation which God has so plainly laid down in his holy word, that towards them *mercy* might be exercised; instead of adopting plans of their own, which display an attempt at being wise above what is written, and thereby become *hardened* by a voluntary rejection of the

counsel of God. At the conclusion of the apostle's masterpiece of argument, illustrated by various figures of election and reprobation in favor of God's love to the believing Gentile, and to justify his rejection of the obstinate predestinarian Jew, he gives a cautionary address to the Gentile convert not to "be high-minded, but to fear." And this he also introduces by a figure of speech which most decidedly makes the reprobation and election, for which the apostle contends, *conditional*. "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again." Now this is quite straight forward, and is language which cannot be misunderstood by the unsophisticated and most illiterate person.—The introduction of this subject may be considered by some, an innovation; and as being carried out to an unnecessary extent. The writer hopes, however, that the remarks will prove serviceable to some individuals into whose hands the work may fall. The design he has had in view is the preservation of the doubtful and the wavering, from relinquishing the doctrine of *conditional* salvation and reprobation, against the injurious attempts of those who hold contrary opinions. A farther illustration of the subject may be found at page 49, article "FINAL PERSEVERANCE."

The society at Ponton still exists. The greater part of the members who were preserved from the wreck, when so many went overboard during the furious gale which blew from the latitude of Geneva, and who had previously combatted the blasts of worldly hostility at the commencement of methodism in the village, having endured the tempest and weathered the storm, they continue unto this day, and are found faithful. Several have been added to their number at different periods, and a few have gone to Abraham's bosom; whilst others have removed to different parts of the country, where, in general, they have joined in fellowship with the people of God whither they have gone to reside. All are not lost. The Methodist "Old Ship" continues to sail in this part of the seas; and it is more than anticipated that numbers will come on board as passengers, in perfect confidence of being conveyed in safety to the desired haven,

"Where all the ship's company meet,  
Who sailed with the Saviour beneath."

The war of polemical strife has greatly subsided. Several of the parties who were most forward to perpetuate it, appear to have learned wisdom by the things they have suffered, and therefore have declined impetuous opposition. What principally remains to be heard, is the watchword of a sentinel now and then.

Two or three local preachers have arisen out of the society at Ponton. Among these is William Harris, whose name appears the second on the plan, and who still resides in the village. A rustic youth, brought up to follow the plough, and who had received, previously to his conversion, very little if

any education, was another. But on being brought to the knowledge of the truth, and uniting in christian society, which was in the year 1806, he imbibed a taste for reading, in which he made rapid progress. He listened very attentively to discourses delivered from the pulpit, and thought closely for himself; which, together with religious converse, and the perusal of select works on christian experience and theology, tended to form his understanding, and to store his mind with knowledge of the most useful kind. After a few years he was taken on the plan to act as a local preacher. As his thirst for knowledge continued to increase, he bought elementary books to commence the study of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Here he met with impediments for the want of a living tutor. A clergyman in the neighbourhood, who had formerly been a Methodist and a local preacher, gave him a few lessons, and instilled into his mind thoughts of entering the ministry in the Establishment, and offered to recommend him to an academy in Buckinghamshire which had been founded for the education and training up of pious young men for the church, and which was supported by an association of evangelical clergymen. Propelled as he was by an insatiable desire to accomplish the task he had commenced in the acquisition of the languages, the temptation was found too strong for him to resist. He accordingly retired from the Methodists and entered this seminary of scholastic lore. Whilst there, the aptitude and vigour of his mind soon began to be displayed in the rapid advancement which he made in acquiring the languages, insomuch that before the termination of two-thirds of the time usually allotted for the education of the students, he



had made those attainments which were deemed more than sufficient to enable him to pass the examination, before the bishop, for ordination. On leaving the institution, he spent sometime in a gentleman's family as tutor to his sons, until he obtained orders and a curacy. He is now labouring in some part of Yorkshire as a clergyman in the church of England, and is much esteemed by the parishioners. He both retains and preaches the doctrinal sentiments of evangelical Arminians.

## CHAPTER X.

### SOCIETIES FORMED AT SOUTH WITHAM, SEWSTERN, BOURN, BARROWBY, AND BARKSTON.

On the southern extremity of the circuit, eleven miles from Grantham, lies South Witham. It is from this village that the River Witham derives its name, and whence it takes its rise, the meandering stream of which proceeds to Lincoln, and thence pursues its course to Boston, where it terminates in the confluence of The Wash.—A way was opened for the introduction of preaching into Witham soon after the Conference of 1803. Mr. Treadgold, of Woolsthorpe, prevailed upon W. Priestman to have his house licensed for the purpose, in which Mr. King was the first Methodist preacher to announce salvation in the name of Jesus. In about half a year, the means were removed from this house to that of Mr. Robert Ward. The formation of a society was effected shortly after the preaching was commenced, which consisted of a few individuals whose minds had become impressed with the truths to which they listened, and who dared to become singular by uniting in class, that they might the better “work out their own salvation,” and make their “calling and election sure.” And thus they were made, in some sort, a help and an example to their neighbours, who were too much like unto sheep without a shepherd. Mr. Kitchen of Skil-

lington, and Mr. Treadgold, were appointed to meet the class; to which duty they attended alternately until one was raised up in the society who was considered competent for the office of leader.

Mr. and Mrs. Ward were amongst the first members. They have lived to see most of their children, comprising a large family, brought to God, and to unite in society with the Methodists, which is a cause of daily rejoicing to their venerable parents. The father is now in his eighty-third year, and the mother in her seventy-sixth. Mr. Ward retains all his faculties to an unusual extent of perfection for his age. He very soon embraced the truth after he heard it in the house of W. Priestman, as did also Elizabeth his wife. He often regrets that it was so late in life before he entered upon the service of the best of Masters. The sentiment of the poet, he as sensibly feels as he frequently utters:—

“ Ah, why did I so late thee know,  
Thee, lovelier than the sons of men !  
Ah, why did I no sooner go  
To thee, the only ease in pain !  
Asham'd I sigh, and inly mourn,  
That I so late to thee did turn.”

Having been persuaded of the truth of the religious sentiments he had embraced, and brought to experience their happy effects in his own soul, he was not to be induced to relinquish either his opinions or his connexion with the people of God, by the scoffs and derisions he had to endure from some of the more thoughtless and dissipated of his neighbours. And “the hoary head” of this patriarchal man is “found in the way of righteousness,” where he waits the summons of his Lord to receive the

"crown of glory" "which shall be given" him "in that day, and unto all them that love" the "appearing" of Jesus Christ. Robert, the eldest son of Mr. Ward, has been an accredited and acceptable local preacher for near thirty years. He resides at Sproxton.

Mr. Hilton came to Witham a few years after the cause had been established in the village, and by whose union with the society, the hands of the few individuals who were joined in christian fellowship were strengthened. Ever since that period the responsible trust of class-leader has devolved upon him. For several years past he has had to endure the painful affliction of total darkness. But he is found in "the path of the just," which "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." He, together with Mr. Ward, shared, for a long time, the hospitable kindness of providing a home for the preachers on their regular visits to the place. Of late years they have been joined, in this "labour of love" to the messengers of salvation, by Messrs. John Whyman and Rt. Christian. The present chapel was built in 1812, and opened, on the 1st of November, by Mr. John Dixon, of Bassingham. His texts were, Acts xix. 20, and Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Methodism has had much to contend with in several of the places in this circuit, and at different times, from rigid calvinism. A counterpart of the Ponton scene, which has been presented, was re-acted at Sewstern in the year 1814; but which was not permitted to be carried on to that length of time, or extent of injury to the society, as at Ponton. Some circumstances, however, took place, of

a very painful nature: and which, if not to be attributed to a judicial visitation from God, must be resolved into a mysterious Providence. The Antinomian heresy originated in the society with a local preacher who resided in the village. He was a warm hearted man, and somewhat irascible in temper; and was always considered by his brethren to be more under the influence of misguided zeal, than subordinate to reason and revelation. And he was, besides, a little tinctured with calvinism. After awhile he began to progress from less to more, until he reached in the climax the very summit of predestinarianism. He read the bombast of Huntington, resorted occasionally to the ministry of the curate of Stoke church, and sought intercourse with individuals of the "reprobation" school; by which means he was inducted to the calvinian wardrobe, whence he soon came out in perfect attire, having put on "the finished robe of Christ's righteousness." Now he began to flourish away, and exhibit the splendour of his Genevian garment, in the Methodist chapel, at Sewstern. He was required to give up his plan as a local preacher; but he persisted to occupy the pulpit, off the time that other preachers were appointed there; and which was imprudently permitted him by his brother-in-law, on whose ground the chapel was built. For near six months he regularly preached on Sunday evenings, having been preceded by a local preacher in the afternoon. He would occasionally sit to hear his predecessor in the pulpit, when his adroitness in detecting the heterodoxy which might be advanced, was shewn by various distorted features and contemptuous gesticulations; and at the conclusion of the service it would be announced, either by himself or his bro-

ther-in-law, that W. Monk would preach in the evening, when he would take occasion to pull in pieces the discourse to which he had listened, and attempt to exhibit in contrast the doctrines he had embraced and those of methodism. It seemed to afford him amusement to caricature the principles of the connexion from which he had departed. "But wisdom is justified of her children." Effects shew which is the more excellent way. In this manner he laboured to sow the seed of discord, and "to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death," in the society and congregation. Proceedings of this kind were not long to be endured. As Mr. I. refused to the Methodists the peaceable possession of the chapel, they retired to the house of widow Townsend; and where the means of grace were continued for eight or nine years.

The chapel had been built by private and public subscriptions for the sole use of the Methodists; but by some unforeseen circumstance, its legal security to the Connexion had been neglected; and at this juncture, Mr. I. refused to cede it over to the nominated trustees for its original purposes. Monk was therefore left to the pulpit and the chapel, in unmolested reign. But a cloud of darkness rested upon their tabernacle. Pecuniary losses, and bereavements by the icy hand of death, in rapid succession, blighted their prospects, and soon put an end to these untoward proceedings. In one of the principal families which took a part in supporting Monk in the chapel, besides an unusual loss in cattle,—the father was suddenly killed,—the son had two of his children, the eldest and the youngest, taken away by an unlooked-for stroke of death,—whilst he himself, the father of the two children, died of

a brain fever. And about the same time, Monk was visited with disease, which, in a few days, consigned him to the house appointed for all living. These afflictive providences all took place within a very short time. And another individual in respectable circumstances, who was a strenuous abettor of the conduct of Monk, was rapidly reduced in his circumstances, and has since ended his days in a workhouse. Whatever might occasion these afflictive visitations, their taking place in the manner and at the time they did, formed a remarkable coincidence, when viewed in connexion with the conduct of the party that was forward to dispossess the Methodists of the chapel, and to rend the society in pieces. When an individual, holding an office in a religious society, alters his opinions,—which he has a right to do, independently of others, if he see fit,—he ought quietly to resign his office and withdraw from the community, and not take advantage of the investment of office, by attempts to subvert, in a violent and clandestine manner, the sentiments and discipline of the body, to which the members are peaceably inclined to adhere. Nor ought others to support and abet an office bearer in such acts of insubordination, which would be to constitute them accomplices in his crime, and involve them in equal reprehension. “Now I beseech you, brethren,” exhorts the apostle, “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” The great Head of the church has exhibited the state of such in an aspect which is truly alarming. “It is impossible,” says he, “but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and

he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."—Rom. xvi. 17. Luke xvii. 1, 2.

It was thought by some, at the time of Monk's seceding from the Methodists, that he expected his influence was such in the society, as to draw away the greater part along with him. In this, however, he was mistaken. But few were overcome. For awhile several were perplexed, but recovered a right position, and became better acquainted with the doctrines of methodism, and more fixed in their attachment to its economy in general. Mr. and Mrs. Greasley, Samuel Veasy, and others who might be named, were pillars in the society at that time, and by whose consistency of conduct, and pious endeavours, by the blessing of God, many a fainting soul was upheld, and preserved from going overboard.

A local preacher, whose name is not recollected, and who afterwards went out to travel, is said to have been the first to preach at Sewstern. He was introduced by Mrs. Christian, of Skillington, and was from Carlton near Nottingham. This was in the year 1803, and at the house of Hugh Stevens. There appear twelve members on the circuit list, in the year 1806. The present chapel was built in 1823, and was opened, October the 19th, by Messrs. Fletcher and Tatham. The former chapel was erected when Messrs. Day and Pollard travelled in the circuit, and was opened by the latter. The society has been much increased of late years, and is in a peaceable and prosperous state. A class has been formed at Buckminster, and occasional preaching introduced. Sewstern is a hamlet of Buckminster.

Bourn was the next place, in order of time, that was visited with preaching, and where the cause of



methodism has hitherto subsisted. And notwithstanding it has had to encounter much opposition, at different periods; and among which difficulties there have arisen, out of its own pale, persons whose instability and immorality of conduct were such as to inflict wounds which were beyond, as might be supposed, the possibility of healing;—persons who “went out from us,” as the apostle says, “but they were not of us” when they went out, their hearts having previously departed from God;—yet the phenomenon of a bush burning with fire and not consumed, has been presented in the continuance and gradual prosperity of the Wesleyan interest in the town of Bourn.

When historical narrations are deduced from traditional sources, the evidence is less substantial than when obtained from original documents. That such persons as are inclined to scrupulosity may not question the manner in which the Methodist ministry found its way into Bourn, the precise circumstances shall be given in the words of an individual who was one of the party that first invited the preachers to the town. He is now far advanced in life; and although there has been a deterioration in his religious conduct, of which he is deeply sensible, his present experience and proceedings are such as to insure the confidence of his brethren, and who esteem him as being truly devoted to God. The statement he writes is as follows: “In 1808, four men of Bourn, like unto Noah’s dove, had no rest for the soles of their feet, nor could they find any in Bourn. At the Church there was an old man to minister, who delivered a sermon, ten minutes long, only once every Sunday, and Jesus seldom mentioned. The Baptist minister affirmed the

word was the Spirit, and robbed us of our Comforter; and except we were baptised in their water we could not be saved. The writer of this asserts, he questioned the members of both places, and not one durst affirm that they ever knew their sins forgiven. We consulted and agreed to get the Methodists to come and preach to us, for the people around us were desperately wicked. Knowing the Methodists preached at Aslackby, we went on the preaching night. Mr. Pollard preached. We staid till the people were gone, and then spoke to him, to know if we could be favored with preaching at Bourn. I told him our reasons as above. We informed him that we would engage a room, and would take as good care of him and his horse as our circumstances would admit. Accordingly on the 14th of January, 1809, Mr. Pollard came; when I told him he had well done to come. We paid two shillings and sixpence a night for the room to preach in. The minister and his horse were obliged to be at a public house, until the dear Comforter opened some more blind eyes, and then they opened their houses to take him in. And I am persuaded that many have been born again under their ministry, and are now singing in glory the praises of Him, of whom they had never seriously thought before the Methodists came to Bourn."

Of the state of things at the time to which allusion is here made, the account given, no doubt, is tolerably correct. But that an improvement has taken place it will most readily be admitted. Whatever the sentiments and manner of preaching may have been of particular ministers, the standard theology both of the Establishment and the General Baptists, if the writer mistakes not, goes to main-

tain the essential doctrines of Christ crucified, as the foundation of a sinner's hope, and the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, as well as the necessity of the Spirit's agency to attest to the heart of man his sins forgiven, and to purify the soul of a believer from all iniquity. What has been said of the necessity of the preacher being sent to an inn for accommodation, that difficulty was soon obviated, when for both man and horse ample provision was made by the voluntary kindness of several families, and which has been continued for upwards of twenty-five years. Among which families might be named those of Messrs. J. and T. Redshaw, T. Stokes, and J. Eggleston: and previously to these were a few others who took part, for a short time, in entertaining the servants of Christ, who came first to announce the word of reconciliation at Bourn.

Mr. John Redshaw died in the spring of 1834. He had been in society several years, and was a man of strict integrity and industrious habits. His disposition was kind and peaceable, and his manners quite unassuming. His house was the local preachers' home for a number of years; to whose comfort, he and Mrs. R. who still survives her husband, paid the most cheerful attention. The affliction which terminated his earthly existence, was but of few days' continuance. But he knew in whom he had believed, which rendered the closing scene of life both tranquil and happy. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Two youths, whilst apprentices, at different periods, to Messrs. Redshaw and Son, were brought to God; and afterwards called into the work of the ministry. The latter is Mr.

James Taylor, now travelling in the Ringwood circuit. The former was Mr. John Gillison, who went out as a missionary to Western Africa. He was an amiable young man, and gave promising indications of becoming an able minister of the gospel, had God seen it good to have prolonged his life. He had not laboured many months in his high and holy avocation before he fell a victim to the epidemic of the country. The Minutes of Conference for 1820, record his death as follows:—"John Gillison, who was called to an early reward at Sierra Leone, West Africa, during the great mortality which prevailed last year at that station. He was converted to God when very young, at Bourn, in the Grantham circuit, where he was for some years a member of the Methodist society, and acted as a local preacher, much esteemed for his piety and talents. In the year 1818 he was appointed to the Sierra Leone Mission, in which he laboured for seven months with considerable success. Mr. Baker, his colleague, writes, 'In the evening of July the 30th, after returning from preaching, my late colleague went to bed rather poorly, and before morning was seized with fever. After some days I got myself assisted, weak as I was, into his room, as I much wished to inquire into the state of his mind. When I came, he requested to be helped up in bed, and we seemed like two dear friends meeting, who had long been separated. I immediately asked, Is Jesus precious to you? He directly answered, Yes! Glory be to God for it, he is! Next morning I again called, and found him happy in God, and prepared for his will; and in all the intervals of delirium which afterwards occurred, he continued to express himself in the same manner,

till, on August 10th, he exchanged mortality for the joy of his Lord, in the twenty-second year of his age.' "

The chapel, at Bourn, was built in 1811. The house in West-street was bought in 1834, for the residence of a third preacher, who was to be solicited of the Conference of that year, and who was accordingly appointed. The purchase of this house, and the necessary repairs it underwent, put the circuit to the expense of £320, the greater part of which was raised by subscription. A few years previously, the chapel had been disburdened of a considerable portion of its debt, by the personal sacrifice of different sums on the part of the trustees, which was met by a grant from the General Chapel Fund. In the accomplishment of these objects, the society at Bourn is much indebted to Mr. G. Hallam, of Croxton, for his munificence.

A division of the circuit was attempted at the Conference of 1835. But after several inquiries it was judged unadvisable as yet to effect it, owing to the smallness of the society in Bourn, and the generally weak state of the cause in most of the places which would form the Bourn circuit. That the division was not accomplished is regretted by many. But it was a speculation which the Conference did not feel justified in hazarding. The time, however, is not far distant, it is hoped, when the resources of that part of the circuit will become such, that the division will be considered no longer an object of apprehension, by the indemnity it will afford against all probable embarrassment.

Whoever considers the destitute state of this part of the country, must at once see the importance of additional labour being given to the cultivation of

its moral wastes. Within the geographical boundary of what would form the Bourn circuit, there are fifty-eight towns and villages, only eighteen of which are more or less visited by the Methodists; leaving forty unoccupied; and where but little evangelical seed is sown. Were a few individuals, possessing property in the neighbourhood, to come forward, and support by liberal subscriptions, a missionary deputed by Conference, for a few years, much of the fallow ground might be broken up and added to the spiritual enclosure of the church of Jesus Christ. And O! to what advantage might a few hundred pounds of unoccupied property be applied in this way! Many poor sinners who are now in darkness and in the paths of misery, would, in all probability, be given to see light in the Lord and brought to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God; thereby "the wilderness" would become "a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."

The country about Bourn is very pleasant, and the district allotted to it would constitute an interesting circuit, in the form of an half circle; which would extend, south, from Bourn, to Market Deeping, seven miles; and, north, to Billingborough, nine miles; and from the middle of this line, west, to Corby and Burton Coggles, eight miles. Were this portion deducted, the Grantham circuit would be left, in all reason, sufficiently large. The extremity of which, south of Grantham, to South Witham, would be eleven miles; north, to Westborough, seven miles; east, to Ancaster and Sudbrooke, eight miles; and west, to Granby, twelve miles. Within this space there are seventy-eight towns and villages, forty of which have regular preaching, and thirty-eight remain to be visited

with the Methodist ministry, if need require it, and opportunity should be presented. Some of the places are contiguous to others already occupied, which renders it less necessary for such places to have established preaching. This part of the circuit is more amply supplied with means than that of Bourn. The length of the circuit, in its present form, from Granby to Market Deeping, is thirty-eight miles; and, on an average, is about eighteen miles in width. The population fifty thousand. There are just a hundred parish churches within the limits of the circuit; two Catholic, two Independent, one General and one Particular Baptist, two Calvinist and three Ranters' chapels.

The ratio of members in the Methodist society is about one to twenty of the inhabitants in Lincolnshire. If in this proportion the Bourn side of the circuit raised its quota, there would be seven hundred and eighty in the society; instead of which, out of a population of sixteen thousand, there are but two hundred members. There is evidently less of methodism,—and, it is to be feared, more of ignorance,—in this part of the county than any other. And there is also but very little dissenting influence, there being no other cause of importance save the General Baptist church at Bourn. Here then a vast and comparatively unoccupied field of usefulness lies before the servants of the Lord; and which, if entered and proportionably cultivated, is as likely to be productive of fruit, to the glory of God, as the moral soil of other parts of Lincolnshire. The gospel has emanated from Bourn, at different periods, into several villages adjacent, by the zealous labours of a few local preachers, where it has taken root in the formation of societies and

Sunday schools. And these labourers in the vineyard of Jesus Christ, being joined by other preachers in the neighbourhood, the ground which has thus been occupied, continues to be maintained and cultivated; and by whose persevering endeavours, under the direction and assistance of the preacher stationed at Bourn, the blessed work of evangelization will, it is not doubted, progressively extend.

In concluding these remarks, it is but justice due to the society at Bourn to state, that the leading members are cordially attached to methodism as it is; and have not been found to indulge suspicions of the want of purity in the motives which guide influential persons in the management of public affairs in the vast Connexion of Methodism; nor to pour forth invectives against certain individuals who rank amongst the best and holiest of ministers which the church of God ever produced;—a practice with some of late, of whom better things should have been expected. And that to persist in a conduct of this kind, nothing certainly can be more painful to the minds, nor opposed to the usefulness, of the preachers who labour in those circuits where it exists.

Barrowby is a village on which considerable labour has been bestowed. But for a succession of years it was like ploughing upon the rock. For some time a blaspheming opposition was made to the introduction of methodism, when the preachers first began to announce the gospel out of doors. And as the foremost in this sort of hostility were persons of influence, some were encouraged to imitate their example, whilst the remainder, for the most part, were either intimidated or satisfied to continue as



they were in ignorance and indifference. In the removal of two or three persons by death, the violence of opposition subsided. A small class had been twice formed, and as often dissolved; whilst the continuance of preaching was equally unsuccessful. But of late years the cause of methodism has taken a hold upon the place, which, it is hoped, will not be relinquished; and be found of extensively saving benefit to the inhabitants. Seni Newcomb is one of the first that joined in class, and who has continued ever since very steady and constant in his attachment to the cause, and in looking to the welfare of his soul. And whilst, in the interval, he has occasionally, and for a length of time, been left as the sparrow alone upon the house top, his care to hold on his way was shewn by a constant attendance upon the means of grace in the chapel at Grantham; and whither he generally proceeded without a companion.

In the year 1810, a house was licensed adjoining the church-yard. On Mr. W. Moulton conducting the first service in it, he was cited by the constable to appear before the rector, who was a magistrate, to answer for his temerity in daring to intrude upon his ecclesiastical territories by preaching to his people. Mr. M. obeyed the summons, and was escorted into the magisterial hall; where was not a little parade exhibited to impose upon his fears. The interrogations of the magistrate were judiciously and firmly answered by the preacher; insomuch that the tables were well-nigh turned betwixt the judge and the prisoner, as in the case of Paul and Felix. The consequence was that Mr. M. was politely dismissed. And it is but justice due to the rector to state, that he never afterwards took part in openly

interfering with the Methodists; whilst his candour was such as to declare that Mr. Moulton was both a scholar and a gentleman.

In 1833, a friend in the village gave a piece of ground on which to build a chapel; and which was erected the same year, and opened in the month of June. During the spring of 1835, the chapel was lengthened to twice its former size, and the reformed society was in an encouraging state of progressive improvement.

In the year 1812, when Messrs. R. Pattisson and G. Wilson were stationed in the circuit, preaching was commenced at Barkston. Mr. W. Smith, some time before this had been brought to a sense of sin and to decide for truth and heaven, under the powerful ministry of the curate of Ropsley, to whose church he occasionally went. Several of his relatives also about the same period were awakened and led to Christ by the pointed appeals and persuasive arguments of this clergyman. The mind of Mr. Smith being enlightened, and thirsting after righteousness, he availed himself of hearing the gospel as opportunity served wherever it was proclaimed. At this juncture he was led to hear the Methodists at Grantham. The word was made a blessing to his soul; and as he felt a strong affection for the people, he soon attached himself to the society by becoming a member. He regularly met in class at Grantham, walking from Barkston for that purpose, and to hear preaching, every Sunday; and would induce as he was able a few of his neighbours to accompany him. Persuaded as he was, that the fear of God and the attainment of religion and practical exemplification of piety, form the great business of every man's life, he

was anxious that the inhabitants of the village in which he resided, should be brought to lay this subject more seriously to heart, than it was evident the generality of them did. And as in his judgment the Methodist ministry was well adapted to arouse the sleepy conscience, and to point out clearly the way to God for reconciliation and peace; without conferring with flesh and blood, but from a sense of duty which he owed to his redeeming Lord, and from pure love to the souls of those about him, he invited the preachers to his house, and set apart the largest and best room he had, in which they might announce the word of life; that such of his neighbours as were disposed to attend, might hear for themselves, in the hope that it might prove to the salvation of many. The respect in which Mr. Smith was held seemed to deter persecution. The cause has never been assailed in this village in that low and vulgar form of opposition, which methodism has met with in many other places. For twenty years the means of grace were held in this room, when they were removed to the present chapel, which was erected in 1832, and opened on Friday, the 6th of October, in the same year. Mr. John Moulton, of Lincoln, preached on the occasion; and Mr. J. Burgess, of Sleaford, on the following Sunday. A good society was raised during the period that preaching was continued in the house of Mr. Smith. Many souls were translated out of darkness into marvellous light, and brought to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God. Under a sermon delivered by Mr. W. B. Stephenson whilst travelling in the circuit, a young lady, who afterwards became the wife of a clergyman, obtained a clear sense of her acceptance with God, and was enabled to declare that Jesus Christ

"hath power upon earth to forgive sins." And a few others of intelligence and respectability, on different occasions, were raised up to bear witness to the same incontestible fact. But especially among the poor, the glad tidings of the gospel have more generally prevailed.

The first two years of occupying the chapel, things seemed to be in a languishing state, and the cause evidently did not prosper so well as it had done in the house. A degree of gloom and painful concern was felt on this account by some who had the spiritual interests of Zion at heart. Self examination, fervent prayer, and purposes of entire devotedness to God, were means resorted to by several in the society, for God to make bare his arm and prosper his work among them. Assistance from Grantham, —where a gracious influence from on high had recently been poured out,—was afforded, by several persons going over to unite with them in prayer for this special object. "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Prayer and faith prevailed. God condescended to bless them, and that abundantly. Many souls within a few weeks were brought to rejoice in a sense of pardoning mercy; whilst several others could testify that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. The society was more than doubled, so that from twenty-five members at the Christmas quarterly visitation, there were thirty-two additional in March following. And of these new converts there was scarcely one but who gave a clear statement of having obtained redemption in the blood of Christ the forgiveness of sins. Several from Honington were of the number added to the

society in this revival. May they be found faithful. The chapel has already become too small to contain the congregation which usually attends on Sunday evenings, and thoughts are entertained of having it enlarged.

If the words of a person have greater weight at one period of his life than another, it is when he comes to the closing scene of mortality. The warning voice of Richard Moore, a poor man at Honington, when upon his death-bed, affected many who visited him even to tears, and fastened a conviction on the mind that religion was more than form; that it was capable of making its possessor peaceful and happy in the prospect of death, and to rejoice on the verge of the grave in the assurance of heaven and of a resurrection to life everlasting. Conscious that his end was drawing nigh, Richard sent for several of his neighbours that he might give them his parting blessing and advice: as some came and went away, they were succeeded by others, who heard the extraordinary manner in which he spake to those who visited him, until a great part of the village had made a personal call at the humble cottage of the dying saint. His addresses to them were very remarkable, and well suited to the various circumstances of life in which they were placed. He seemed to know intuitively the moral condition of his visitors, and gave to each a word in season, exhorting all to "flee from the wrath to come," and to seek the Lord whilst he might be found and to call upon him whilst he was near. They saw the grace of God in him, and how that it made him more than conqueror in the mortal struggle,—that the love of Christ to his soul was sweeter than life, and stronger than death,—that he had not

his religion to seek when he most needed it, and that if they too feared the Lord, put away all their sins, and called upon the name of God for mercy, he would save them as he had saved him, and that they should then have the prospect of meeting him in a better world where parting is no more. He praised God and prayed to him, and exhorted the people, almost incessantly, until his voice was lost in death, when his nobler powers, being freed from the cumbersome clay, went forth to employ their energies in the praises of God, amidst the chorus of saints and angels around the heavenly throne. He being dead yet speaketh. The circumstances connected with this poor man's death operated favorably upon the minds of many of those who had interviews with him during his short affliction. They became more generally disposed to hear the gospel as preached in the place where Richard was wont to resort, and were better prepared to listen to the truths delivered with personal application. Hence may be traced the considerable good which has been subsequently effected in the village. The ardent desire also which Richard possessed for the salvation of those about him, and his importunate pleadings with God for that object, might have some effect in procuring those gracious influences from on high which have happily led many to turn their feet into the testimonies of the Lord. "The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The wife of Richard, who has become serious since the death of her husband, states that for a few days about the time of his dissolution, she frequently heard in the house the most harmonious sounds beyond what she can describe. This may seem strange to some, and be a subject for the speculation of those who pro-

fess a philosophical religion which is circumscribed by rational demonstration. Richard was a man whose mental powers were not the strongest, and considered as somewhat below mediocrity amongst persons of the same rank in life with himself. But he made better use of his one talent of natural capacity than many do, who possess double or five times the quantity. He established a Sunday School in the village, and taught the children himself in his own house, commencing and concluding the time of teaching with singing and prayer, and would take his little flock to the services of the parish church. He had as many as from sixty to seventy scholars. He had serious thoughts at one time of dividing the number, and of getting some one to teach the children who came from the other end of the village, in another house: but when he named the circumstance in the school, a little girl who resided at the other part of the town, finding from the plan he was about to adopt that she was likely to go over to another teacher, looking him in the face said "Don't send me." Which was succeeded by another, and another, making the same request. He found, therefore, in the affection of the children, an impediment in the way of accomplishing his design, which induced him to abandon it. This shows how much he was beloved by the objects of his charge; and to gain the attachment of children, as he did, was no mean evidence of the excellence of his character, and of the ability he possessed to sustain the office of a religious teacher in a Sunday school. After his school had increased from three or four children at the beginning to upwards of sixty, it was a very imposing sight to see this poor and comparatively illiterate man, conduct-

ing this numerous juvenile band through the street to the church, and Sabbath after Sabbath, at the end of the hard toil of his week-days' labour, diligently exerting his ability in the moral culture of these immortal plants, to train them up for God and heaven. And in this labour of love he had none to help him for a length of time, until a young gentleman in the parish was moved to take a share in teaching the children to read and spell. Richard was both gratified and thankful in the voluntary assistance thus afforded him. And it appears that the good sense of this person was such, that he either did not wish to intimidate his humble coadjutor by his presence, or for *some other reason* best known to himself, that he was always careful to come after, and to leave before, the devotional exercises of the school were performed by Richard. At the death of the latter, which was in August, 1833, the school was broken up and the children scattered; and in which state they have remained up to the present time. No remark on this state of things is necessary: the warning voice of Richard Moore on his death-bed, and the example of his life, are sufficient to point out the duty of his survivors.

There was a period in poor Richard's religious career, when his feet had well-nigh slipped, and that by listening to the advice of an old professor who had lost his spirituality and grown weary in well-doing. As they were talking together one day, he told Richard that he did not see the use of class-meetings, and he would find if he gave them up, that his soul would prosper as well without them as with them; making other objections also, which were calculated to beguile a feeble and unsuspecting mind. This advice was not dissimilar to that



of the old prophet to the young one, as recorded in the 13th chapter of the 1st book of Kings. Richard acted upon the advice: he forsook the fellowship of saints and ceased to assemble with his brethren with whom he had been wont to take sweet council, until by degrees he imperceptibly got into a cold and indifferent state of feeling. He was happily aroused from this langour by the interrogations and admonitions of a pious female friend, to whom he acknowledged the great loss he had sustained in spiritual enjoyments, by listening to the advice of one whose judgment he had preferred to his own and to that of his proper religious guides. It was at this time, when brought to shed those humble and contrite tears which flow from true repentance, and whilst seeking to God to restore to him the joys of his salvation, that he determined upon the plan of a Sunday School. He commenced meeting in class again, and continued a steady, consistent, and zealous member of society, at Barkston, until God called him to join the triumphant church above.

In the spring of 1834, Mr. and Mrs. Smith had their faith strongly exercised, and their submission to the divine will brought to a severe test, in the death of their eldest child, Sarah, in the eighteenth year of her age. She was to them a beloved daughter; and by all who shared any intimate acquaintance with her, she was much regarded. She seemed to be formed, by her modest and unassuming manners, and by the rectitude of her moral conduct, to engage attention and conciliate esteem. Having a rising offspring, her parents were desirous of affording her a liberal education, that she might assist the younger branches of the family in their learning, or for general advantages to herself in future life; she

was therefore placed in a ladies' seminary at Grantham, under the management of the Misses Simpson. From her aptitude to learn, and the ready mode of instruction which she met with in this school, where all the useful and ornamental branches of female education are taught, Miss Smith not only made progress, but soon became considerably proficient in every thing to which she turned her attention. The greatest neatness and order were apparent in all her arrangements. In her clothes, books, papers, and in keeping her accounts, she was a pattern for method and exactness. In the autumn of 1833, she removed from the school to the family of Mr. Dennis, at Fishtoft near Boston, where she engaged as governess to the children. As to her experience of religion at this time, although she was not savingly converted to God, yet she walked in the fear of the Lord, and often felt much concern about her eternal safety, and would lament her want of deeper contrition, and her backwardness to yield her heart freely and fully to God. She was led to trace the state of her mind under certain sermons which she heard, and would occasionally note down in her pocket book the views she entertained of her spiritual condition. There was considerable diffidence about her in opening her mind to any one on religious subjects, as to what were her desires and convictions. This might principally arise from the low opinion which she entertained of herself, and the consciousness she had of the necessity of becoming fully decided for God before salvation could be attained; and that consequently it would not become her to speak on a subject of such vital importance whilst she felt herself so defective. What is here stated of the workings of her mind, and the

impressions of truth upon her heart, has been gathered from her memoranda; in accordance with which her deportment in the house of God, her esteem for religious people, and the respect which she paid to ministers and the preachers of the gospel, were such as to indicate that she revered divine things, and was the subject of a gracious influence. A careful religious training had been imposed upon her, and from which she had never manifested the slightest disposition to revolt; so that the prevailing pleasures and amusements of the world, which are calculated to estrange the mind from God, and to pursue which the generality of youth are too much inclined, were to her void of attractions.

To the family in which she had become a member, she had greatly endeared herself, by her kind and bland behaviour. Her ability for so young a person in the situation which she held, was exercised in a way that gave much satisfaction. The consistent religious profession and happy piety which she was called to witness in the house of Mr. Dennis, had a very blessed influence on her mind, and tended much to prepare her for the scene which was to follow. During the latter end of April she was seized with influenza, which at that time was epidemical in many parts of the country. No serious apprehensions of the tendency of the disease were entertained for the first two or three days; but on the eighth day it ended fatally. At the commencement of the attack she was much concerned about the safety of her soul; guilty fear arrested her, and she felt that she was not prepared to die. That she had sinned, and was possessed of a sinful nature, she had no need to be told, since of that fact she was deeply conscious. And as she was not a stranger to the

plan of salvation, being thus aroused, she began to call mightily upon God to save her. The importunity with which she supplicated the throne of grace for mercy was unabated for many hours; whilst her voice was raised to that degree for God to save her then and there, that it might be heard in all the house. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." She was heard in that she feared:—faith was inspired,—she laid hold upon the promise,—and at once the Saviour's love was shed abroad in her heart, and she became as happy as she had been previously distressed. The triumphs of the Saviour's grace were now as loudly sung, as she had before loudly called for mercy. It was a joyful scene, as is testified by those who witnessed it. Her very countenance beamed forth heaven, and bespoke the serenity of her soul. She continued very happy, praising the God of her salvation, and rejoicing with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. The disease having taken an unfavorable turn, her parents were sent for, but ere they arrived the purified spirit of their hopeful and lovely child had fled to the mansions of bliss.—Thus died Sarah Smith, May 3, 1834, an example of the insecurity of the bloom of youth against the arrow of death. The monitory lesson given to such as are of her age who may read this account, is the following passage, from which her death was improved in a funeral discourse, in the chapel at Barkston: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

## CHAPTER XI.

VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS,—OUT DOOR-PREACHING,—SOCIETIES FORMED,—THE CHARACTER AND HAPPY DEATHS OF INDIVIDUALS.

The love of God is the proper incentive to the love of man. The former cannot exist where the latter is not found. For "this commandment have we from him," "That he who loveth God love his brother also." And this "love" is not manifested "in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Cause and effect are not only apparent in things natural, but equally so in those which are moral. Young says, when depicting the prevalent existence of false notions in morality,

"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!  
Thou maker of new morals to mankind!  
The grand morality is love of Thee."

The fruit of this cause, in a christian land, are those charitable institutions, of almost every kind, which may be sought for in vain amongst the product of ancient systems of philosophy, and that of modern scepticism. It is not the genius of such systems to build lazar-houses, erect hospitals, institute Dorcas and stranger's friend societies, and establish sabbath schools and missionary associations. No: it belongs to the religion of the blessed Jesus to visit and to heal the sick, to console the dying, to provide for the indigent, clothe the naked, to teach the

young the fear of God, and to visit distant nations in order to point them the way to heaven. When a community is wanting in a regard to these benevolent plans, a defectiveness in christian principle is strikingly obvious. The Methodists at Grantham established a Sabbath School, and Benevolent, Missionary, and Tract Societies in succession, and which continue in very active and prosperous operation. The Sunday School was commenced in 1803. The children were taught in the chapel until 1816, when a school room was built in the yard, with a lean-to roof, running all along the chapel end. On this becoming too small, a piece of ground was bought in Little Gonerby, vested in trustees, and a large building erected thereupon in 1818. This room was considerably enlarged in 1835.

The Benevolent Society was instituted in 1810. The proceeds of which have averaged from seventy to eighty pounds annually, since its commencement. Of this society too much can scarcely be said by way of commendation. Perhaps no monies given in small sums, for the relief of the sick poor, can be presented to them with any thing like equal advantage, as through the medium of this society. It seeks out real objects of distress, without respect to religious sentiments. Whilst with the sick individuals, who are called upon about once in the week, the visitor is required to pray to Almighty God in behalf of their temporal and spiritual condition. And as many die of the sickness in which they are sought out by the society, what can be of greater advantage to them than earnest prayer and pious council? Many who were dark and ignorant, previously to their being thus visited, have been brought to penitence and faith, and left the world

with the hopeful evidence of their admission into the kingdom of heaven. Whilst others, recovering from affliction, have been known to reform their lives, and to cultivate a line of conduct commendable to members of civil and religious society, and to which they had formerly been strangers. Effects like these are not consequent upon indiscriminate charity; nor are they in general sought to be produced. But are there any who object to support the funds because the society emanates from the Wesleyan Chapel? If a man were drowning in the presence of a number of spectators, would it be right to dispute whose rope should be cast? lest whilst they settled that point, the poor sufferer sink below the surface and find a watery grave. It is not only asserted that the Institution merits support, but it challenges investigation. And this it does, not out of ostentation, but from pure design that its benefits may be more extended.—The first Treasurer and Secretary were Mr. Richard Burton and Mr. John Pape. In the following year Mr. James Ferguson succeeded Mr. Burton in the office of Treasurer, whilst the latter acted as Secretary,—Mr. Pape having retired to the chapel in Castlegate, and so consequently withdrew from his religious intercourse with the Methodists. For a number of years, Mr. Ferguson discharged with great fidelity the duties of his office, until, by repeated attacks of paralysis, which so extremely debilitated his whole system, he was necessitated to decline the situation, and to cease entirely from the transactions of public life. Since which time Mr. Richard Hornsby has filled the responsible office of Treasurer; in whom the society has found a most trustworthy servant and liberal contributor.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson were sincerely and steadily attached to the interests of methodism. Their regular attendance at chapel, so long as their health would allow them to walk abroad, was not to be exceeded. And, for a long time, their house was the resort of the preachers who were invited from a distance to preach the sermons on all anniversary occasions, and where they met with the most kind and hospitable reception. These were seasons of profitable intercourse with the ministers of Christ, to Mr. and Mrs. F., and in whose entertainment and society they took great pleasure. The personal afflictions, however, to which they became more heavily subjected, obliged them in the end to relinquish the privilege—for such they considered it—of these visits of the preachers to their house, in favor of others. Mrs. F. who died in the autumn of 1833, was a very generous and *cheerful* subscriber to all the funds of the Connexion, in the printed reports of which, her name may be found as a benefactress. She considered it not merely a duty, but esteemed it a privilege, to give to God's cause and to charitable purposes. When called upon for her contributions, it was not her practice to say, "Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when she had it by her," nor to demur and hesitate, as though to find a tangible argument to justify an unwillingness to give; but she would often say, "I wish it was as much more. I believe the object to be most charitable. May God bless the cause, and may it never fail for want of supporters;" or in some such manner she would express herself. The mind of Mrs. Ferguson was of no ordinary cast: she was an acute sensible woman; and had it not been for the affliction with which she was so long



chastened, which weighed so heavily upon her spirits and checked the energies of her mind, her mental ability would no doubt have been more fully developed and matured; and her religious character and principles would also have shone to much greater advantage. Such was the effect of her malady,—which was a species of St. Vitus's Dance,—that she was frequently driven on the borders of distraction. The whole of her muscular and nervous system was strangely affected, so that she was not able to sit or stand for any length of time, in one posture, without being thrown into various distortions, and would stagger in her walk like one inebriated. It had a similar effect upon her speech, whereby she would express herself with great rapidity and vehemency, which a stranger or prejudiced individual was liable to attribute to an ungovernable temper. She would sometimes complain of great difficulty to retain her reason; and would often assert that she was confirmedly cancerous, from located pains which she felt in various parts of her body. Hence she was perpetually applying leeches, blistering, or taking medicine, which brought on a confirmed dropsy. She languished for awhile under this disease, when after two or three occasions of being tapped, she terminated the mortal struggle, in the fifty-sixth year of her age. Her end was calm and tranquil. Owing to her nervous irritability, her mind was much beclouded and depressed, which led her frequently to write bitter things against herself; and would often express her fears lest she should miss her way to heaven. No one, perhaps, could be more deeply sensible of the depravity of the heart than she was: and of the total insufficiency of good works to merit acceptance with God,

she was in no way ignorant. The only hope she had of God's mercy, was founded on the atoning blood of a crucified Redeemer. And relying on this, as it is trusted she did, the gracious Lord, it may be more than inferred, has admitted her into his presence and glory, where her prayers and her wishes had so frequently ascended before her. The convictions she had for sin, which first led her to decide in favor of a religious life, she attributed to a sermon delivered by the Rev. C. Raby, in Grantham church. This clergyman, for whom she ever afterwards entertained, for his work's sake, a great respect, subsequently left the ministry and the church; and since which time he has resorted to the Calvinist chapel, in Castlegate.

In the year 1811, Mr. and Mrs. Eggleston, of Newark, came to reside with their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. W. Houghton, at Grantham. They were among the first members of society at Newark; and where they had invariably sustained an unsullied character in the world; and for piety, and religious consistency of conduct, their "praise was in all the churches." Mrs. Eggleston died, "in the sure and certain hope" of eternal life, on the 27th of March, 1812, aged sixty-seven. An excellent account of whose conversion and experience, drawn up by Mr. Moulton, appeared in the Methodist Magazine for 1813, page 607. Mr. Eggleston died, in the triumph of faith, on the 14th of March, 1813, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. Some particulars of his life and happy death may be found in the Magazine for 1814, page 536. The mortal remains, both of Mr. and Mrs. E., were interred in the burying-ground attached to the Wesleyan Chapel, at Newark. The happy

deaths of such as have "borne the burden and heat of the day," afford encouragement to their friends and companions, who are left in the militant state, to persevere in maintaining the struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The exit and final conflict of Mr. E. were such as are portrayed of the dying christian :—

" His God sustains him in his final hour !  
His final hour brings glory to his God !"

Many were the profitable and happy sayings of this good man, during the closing scene of mortality. Being in a perfectly sensible state, he desired to be taken out of bed and set in an easy chair, which was accordingly done; when, with clasped hand, and uplifted eyes, he repeatedly uttered, "Glory, glory be to God, I have a blessed prospect!" and shortly afterwards his spirit fled to the paradise of God. Mr. Pattisson improved the occasion of his death, from Rev. xiv. 13.—Soon after Mr. E. came to reside at Grantham, he was appointed to lead the class of Mr. Jonathan Cragg, (on his leaving Spittlegate for Castle Bytham.) At the death of Mr. E. the class was committed to the charge of the writer of this work; and on his going out into the ministry, Mr. T. Dixon became the leader, and who, up to the present time, has continued to meet it in the vestry, as usual, on a Friday night.

Several occurrences of Divine influence, attending the ministry of the word, in different parts of the circuit, whereby many were converted and added to the societies, have been recorded in the course of this work. In the year 1812, whilst Mr. Pattisson travelled in the circuit, a blessed work broke out in

the congregation and society at Grantham; when a goodly number was converted, and several of the members were brought to believe for full salvation; some of whom, to the present day, have held fast their confidence, and unhesitatingly bear testimony to their being "made perfect in love." And thus for the space of twenty-four years they have been the living witnesses of the great doctrine of christian perfection, and whose pious demeanour and consistent conduct demonstrate, in the estimation of those who are best acquainted with them, that their profession is not delusive.

A trophy of the grace of God, at this time, was won, in the conversion of a person whose character and situation in life were such as would seem, humanly speaking, most unlikely for such a change to be produced. He kept a public-house, and followed the business of a carrier, and also that of a fishmonger; and was, as he himself declares, "a very great sinner." His wife was the first to attend the chapel. She had been prevailed upon to accompany a neighbour who had recently obtained profit to her soul, to hear preaching. Having gone a few times, on her return one Sunday evening, she found her husband under the influence of very unkindly feelings towards her. A storm of passion immediately began to vent itself, which soon gathered into a tempest. He declared vengeance towards her if she dared to go again to the Methodist chapel. He neither could nor would stand it. And swore, in an awful manner, that he would wreak his fury upon the windows of two individuals who were conspicuous members of the society. This threat, however, was not executed. At a late hour they retired to rest; but his temper remained un-

controllable. In the end, he was so wrought upon, by satanic influence, that he resolved to get up and hang himself. The halter and the beam in the stable were vividly portrayed to his imagination, whilst his passions, at the instigation of the devil, propelled him to determine upon the horrid deed. His wife laid trembling by his side, praying to God to preserve her from his fury and to have mercy upon him. He partly got out of bed, when a gloomy horror seized him. He saw hell moved from beneath to receive him at his coming. He shuddered at the sight; and like the jailor of Phillippi, was constrained to exclaim, "What must I do to be saved?" The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in him, and he roared through the disquietude of his soul. He begged of his wife to pray for him: and throughout the night till after break of day, he wept and bewailed his sin. Early in the morning he sent for one of the friends, whose windows he had threatened to break the preceding evening, to come to his house to advise and pray with him. He determined upon leading a new life; he departed from iniquity, and forsook a voluntary association with the ungodly; he believed the gospel, and obtained mercy. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Various vicissitudes have been his lot in life: but in the midst of all he has firmly stood as the beaten anvil to the stroke. The writer has known him in respectable circumstances, and when reduced to the lowest state of poverty and affliction, and has heard him bless God for the trials to which he was subjected, as well as triumph in the love of Christ over the fear of death, and in the joyful assurance of everlasting bliss. His latter days, as to this world, have the aspect of being more auspi-

cious than any former ones. May they also be increasingly so for the world to come.

Mrs. Martha Wilson exchanged the militant for the triumphant church, on the 1st of November, 1816, in the sixty-fourth year of her age. She, together with her husband, Mr. Paul Wilson, and their son, came from London to reside at Grantham, in the year 1814. She was a native of Chester. Her mother, Mrs. Cooper, was one of the first members of the Methodist society in that city. She was born in 1703, and died in 1791; which was precisely the period of Mr. Wesley's life, and with whom she was on terms of intimate friendship. Mrs. Wilson was converted to God at the age of fourteen. Her life was a checkered scene, and crowded with toils, disappointments, and crosses, which called her to the exercise of all the graces of the Spirit; and being found faithful, her trials only tended to mature her christian character, and prepare her more fully for the joy of her Lord. She was an acute woman, of sound judgment, and had been, in her younger days, remarkably alert in the transactions of public business and the management of her domestic affairs. The diligent discharge of the duties of life, was happily blended in her with a conscientious regard to the exercises of devotion, whether in the family, the closet, or the house of God. She set the Lord always before her; and to please him, it was her concern to

“Serve with careful Martha's hands,  
And loving Mary's heart.”

She was a widow, in Manchester, with five children, when married to Mr. Wilson, and had the manage-

ment of an extensive hattery. After which she had resided at Gainsborough, London, and other places. Being settled at Grantham, her consistent conduct, both as to the affairs of the world and religion, soon obtained for her the respectful regard of the society into which she had entered on coming to the town, and of which community she had been a member for near fifty years. In her dress, Mrs. Wilson was a pattern of neatness and modesty; and for cleanliness, economy, and industry she was scarcely to be exceeded. Compassion for the poor, hospitality, and a liberal regard for the institutions of religion, were prominent features in her character. On her coming to Grantham, she was much reduced in health; and her constitution was evidently broken by infirmities which were increasing upon her. Oppressed with asthma, the effect of which, together with a severe cold of only two or three days seizure, terminated her earthly existence. But as a faithful servant waiteth the coming of his Lord, she was found watching. Death was a welcome visitant, for she had more than gained the conquest, and was persuaded of the rest that remained for her in the paradise of God. The victories which she achieved in the spiritual warfare, were spontaneously and most devoutly attributed to the grace of her redeeming Lord. None could be more sensible than she was of the import of the Saviour's assertion, "Without me ye can do nothing." Her mortal remains lie interred, on the west side, in the grave yard at Little Gonerby.

In the year 1815, a barn was bought at Colsterworth and fitted up as a chapel, to which the

preaching was introduced from Woolsthorpe. This chapel was sold for a hundred guineas in 1835, and a new chapel erected in a more eligible situation, upon a piece of ground which was very kindly granted for the purpose, by Sir Mountague Cholm-eley, Bart. The tenure is leasehold, of a hundred years, at a nominal rent, with indemnity. The dimensions of the chapel are 43ft. by 30ft., and 18ft. high in the clear, without galleries. It is built of stone. The workmanship was executed by Messrs. W. Miller and D. Dixon, of Grantham. The debt upon it is £168. including £50. from the old chapel, for which interest is paid at four per cent. For the accomplishment of this substantially neat and commodious edifice, the society is much indebted to the laudable exertions of Mr. T. Wheeler, an excise officer, then resident in the village. The foundation stone was laid on Monday, June 22nd, 1835, when a discourse was delivered by the superintendent of the circuit, founded on Nehemiah ii. 20; "The God of heaven, he will prosper us: therefore we his servants will arise and build." The chapel was opened on Friday, November 6th, and Sunday the 15th, by Messrs. R. Newton and W. Smith. The collections amounted to £38. The population of Colsterworth-cum-Woolsthorpe is about a thousand. It lies on the Great North Road, eight miles south of Grantham.

An auxiliary Branch Missionary Society for the circuit, in connexion with the General Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, was formed in 1817. Mr. Ferguson was appointed Treasurer, and Messrs. W. Houghton and T. Cocking, Secretaries. The annual proceeds of this auxiliary have been as follows:—



	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
1818 .....	50	0	0	1827 .....	147	15	10
1819 .....	84	0	0	1828 .....	134	3	1
1820 .....	92	0	0	1829 .....	174	0	3
1821 .....	93	13	0	1830 .....	136	15	1
1822 .....	75	5	11	1831 .....	196	2	0
1823 .....	83	10	9	1832 .....	200	5	7
1824 .....	183	3	6	1833 .....	202	8	2
1825 .....	204	4	0	1834 .....	217	19	7
1826 .....	192	17	5				

A spirit of considerable missionary enterprise was excited amongst the local preachers of the circuit, in the year 1817, and which has continued more or less ever since. Most of the villages were visited by out-door preaching in the summer season of that and the following year. But much opposition had to be encountered by those who engaged in this work, from clerical and magisterial interference. The writer looks back upon these "days gone by" with feelings of no ordinary degree of pleasure and satisfaction, when he took his share with his brethren in this attempt at evangelization. The first essay which he made, and which was the commencement of a reviving at that time of this primitive and apostolic mode of preaching, was at Denton. The people heard very attentively, and expressed their approbation; which gave encouragement to the preacher. But the vicar was sorely displeased. During the week he made it his business to call upon the gentleman in whose employ the writer then was, and requested him to proscribe such interference with his parish, in attempts to unsettle the minds of the people in matters of religion. The answer he received was too much in accordance with a tolerant spirit to encourage his

wishes. He therefore made known his grievance to the chief magistrate of the borough, from whom he obtained a constable's order of arrest, for taking up the preacher if he had temerity sufficient to disturb the quiet of his flock in future. Ignorant of this instrument of the law, Mr. P. Wilson went a fortnight afterwards, and took his stand in the street, on about the same spot where his predecessor stood, and commenced the service by singing a hymn. A number of people soon assembled; amongst whom were the constables, to execute the order they had received. But being personally acquainted with Mr. W., they thought it better to delay the work assigned them until after he had preached, and introduce the business in a friendly manner. They did so; when Mr. W. explained to them. Finding that the affair was likely to be disreputable to the parties concerned in it, they judged it prudent to desist from the execution of their order, although directed by their vicar and the alderman.

Within a few months of the first preaching out of doors at Denton, a young woman,—who had been savingly converted to God through the instrumentality of the word thus announced,—died of a fever, in the blessed assurance of eternal life. At her funeral, and when at the grave after the ceremony was read, the vicar was respectfully asked to give permission for a hymn to be sung. But he turned away in a rage, and denounced the proceedings of the Methodists as heretical and insubordinate, and to be such as demanded absolute suppression. Being thus repulsed, a few of the friends of the deceased sang a hymn in the street, adjoining the church-yard. Three or four years after this occurrence, a small house was certified in the bishop's

court as a place for holding divine worship, and in which the means of grace have since been upheld. A lively society, of about thirty members, now exists at Denton. Thomas Lane, at whose house the people assemble to worship God, has the care of the class, as also of that at Harlaxton. He is a poor man, but his firm attachment to methodism, from conviction that it is of God, has been evinced by his resistance of various formidable attempts which have been made to induce him to give up his connexion with it. Hitherto he has stood as "an iron pillar strong," and has "professed a good profession before many witnesses." And, beneath his humble roof, he has had the honor and the happiness to ascertain that many souls have been born of God, and consequently made heirs of the "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."—The day of eternity can only unfold the advantages to society, which persistence in a conduct like that of the decided and unostentatious friend at Denton, is the means of securing.

Only a very short time after preaching was commenced by the way-side at Denton, a person of the name of Wedgewood made his appearance at Grantham, with the intention of preaching in the Market-place. As he stood upon the cross, and whilst engaged in singing, the constables, with an order from the alderman, seized hold of him, and with unbecoming violence escorted him to the town-hall, when the magistrates committed him to the custody of the keeper of the house of correction, for want of bail for his appearance at the next quarter sessions. Mr. Lockwood, of Bridgeford, hearing of the circumstance, and being aware that the magis-

trates had stepped beyond the boundary of the civil law,—independently of the intolerance of the spirit by which they were actuated,—came over to dispute the point with them. He was apprised of the consequence; that if magistrates elsewhere, hostile to the gospel and to the zeal with which it should be propagated, might be encouraged, from this circumstance, to imitate the example; and that many preachers might be deterred from seeking, in the vicinity of their own residence, after the wandering sheep in the wilderness of error, and on the dark mountains of sin and unbelief: he, therefore, exposed himself to the audacity of the Grantham magistracy, by appearing, on a week-day evening, in his gig, in the market-place. He sang and prayed; but whilst singing the second hymn, the former intruders made their appearance, and conveyed him in the triumph of the tipstaff to the hall of inquisition, where the whole conclave of authorities had met, to sit in judgment upon the heretical delinquent. After a cogitation among themselves of three hours continuance, they decided that their culprit should be forthwith committed to prison, or find security, in two £30. bonds, for his appearance at the next sessions. The latter was obtained. And the event of an interesting trial was now anticipated. Counsel on both sides was sought in London. When the sessions arrived, the two preachers were in attendance to answer the charges alleged against them, but no bill was brought into court. The magistrates' counsel had given them to understand that the functions of their office had been unduly exercised. They were therefore ashamed of their cause, and glad to conceal it from any farther public notice. And as the preachers had no other

object in view, than for it to be understood, that British subjects were protected by British laws in the legitimate rights of conscience, and that the magistrate is only authorised by his office to be "a terror to evil doers," and not "to such as do well,"—they took no farther notice of the private injury which the "insolence of office" had inflicted upon them. It is worthy of remark, that on both occasions, the assembly of people in the market-place, to hear the preachers, was perfectly peaceable, and would have gladly listened to their discourses had they not been officiously prevented. A spirited and descriptive article, in reference to the whole affair, appeared, at that time, in one of the Stamford newspapers, headed, "Ignorance, Bigotry, and Intolerance." Never after this has out-door preaching, in the circuit, been interrupted by magisterial interference. "The Ranters" sallied forth, soon after this, into Grantham and the neighbourhood. The Lord of the Manor, who was a true Ishmaelite,—"his hand," in some sort, "being against every man, and every man's hand against him,"—finding that to preach in the streets was offensive to the corporate body of Grantham, patronised "the Ranters," and built them a kind of tower, upon his premises, adjoining the Town-hall, in High-street, which was sixteen feet high, and ascended by a flight of stone steps. Upon this banistered pinnacle they were accustomed to preach for a length of time, and at such seasons as they pleased. But from the disreputable motive of the gentleman, the conduct of the Ranters, in yielding themselves the instruments of his pleasure, was far from being commendable; whilst the ridiculously elevated position of the speaker seemed to be designed to bur-

lesk religion, and to shew that the intention of the gentleman was not the care he had to save souls as to vex his antagonists.

A few weeks subsequently to the first visit, already named, which was paid to Denton, the same preacher announced salvation in the name of Jesus, in the street at Corby. This was on a Sunday evening, as he returned to Grantham from his appointment at Swinstead. In company with a young man, as they passed through Corby on foot in the forenoon, being an extremely hot day, they called at a house for a drink of water, where they made it known that it was the intention of a Methodist preacher to take his stand upon the cross, at six o'clock, and address the people, and requested the family to publish it. They engaged to do so, and seemed pleased with the intelligence, although such an occurrence in the town had never been recollected. A roughish usage might have been anticipated, from the character of the inhabitants, whose minds were nearly "as dark as the untaught Indian's brood." The place was truly a strong-hold of Satan. An almost total disregard to the sanctity of the sabbath was apparent. Many of the families were Catholics, and being near to Irnham, the seat of Lord Clifford, where is a large and magnificent Catholic chapel, and the inhabitants of which village being all of the Romish persuasion, with the exception of one family, and which family afterwards became Methodists,—the adventure was formidable and hazardous. The preacher was not without his apprehensions, from the character in which he was about to appear at the market-cross, that probably he might meet with a primitive

Methodist reception. On drawing near the town, he and his companion retired under a hedge, where they prayed to God for courage and protection. According to their faith it was done unto them. The time announced having arrived, the preacher stepped upon the cross and gave out a hymn. During the singing of which, a concourse of people had assembled. He took for his text, Acts xvii. 30, 31. Some attempt was made to create a disturbance by a fierce looking man, with a large hedge-stake in his hand; but as he met with little countenance he retired, whilst the congregation was left in great quietness, to listen to the claims of the important duty of repentance, founded on the certainty of a day of judgment. The word was not without effect. Three individuals were afterwards known to profess to have received that conviction for sin which induced them to seek salvation, and to devote themselves to the service of God. A cottager offered an outhouse upon his premises for the use of preaching; but in opposition to which, a gentleman of the sacerdotal community, made it his business to inform him that if he did so, he should use his influence with the landlord and procure for him a discharge from his cottage. The man replied, that he certainly should fulfil his offer, if the Methodists thought fit to accede to his terms; and at the same time reminded him that his threat was in no way creditable to his "cloth." The place was accordingly taken and fitted up as a chapel. A small society was raised; but owing to various inauspicious circumstances, after two or three years the preaching was given up, and the few who were members resorted to Swinstead.

Having been passed by for the space of about ten

years, another effort was made to establish methodism and its auxiliaries at Corby, and principally by the patronage of Mrs. Brackenbury, of Raithby Hall, who was very solicitous that scriptural knowledge should be promoted in a neighbourhood like that of Corby, where so little was attempted to counteract the influence of ignorance, immorality, and Popish error. She placed a relative in a farm at Swayfield; and where, under her auspices, preaching was introduced. At the death of this young man, the farm was taken by Mr. J. A. Matthews, who continues to reside upon it. Mr. M. is a zealous and useful local preacher, and much beloved by his religious friends. At Corby, Mrs. B. established a Bible Society and a Sunday School, and principally supported for some time, a young man,\* who was a local preacher, in the management of the latter, in conjunction with a day-school. His labours on the sabbath were chiefly confined to Corby and its vicinity. To the perfectly gratuitous kindness of this lady, this part of the circuit is much indebted.

The society which now exists at Corby, it is hoped, will continue faithful. The principal management of the affairs connected with the cause of methodism in this important place, devolve upon a young woman of the Protestant family at Irnham. Besides having to lead the female class, she has the superintendence of the Sunday School, and is also engaged as the Tract Distributor and Missionary Collector; and whose labours are increased by the distance of the place from her own residence and

\* This person entered the itinerant work at the Conference of 1834. His name stands upon the Minutes, "John Rossell, second."



the delicate state of her health. The encouragement and prayers of God's people are due to Mary Richardson. W. Osborn, a member of the society, died very happy and triumphantly, on the 15th of September, 1834, aged forty, leaving a widow and six small children to combat with the difficulties of a sinful world. A few others have departed this life in the joyful hope of immortality, who were the product of converting grace, through the instrumentality of the Methodist ministry, at Corby. The expence and labour, therefore, which have been had upon the cultivation of this sterile soil, have not all been lost. "In due time ye shall reap if ye faint not."

Rippingale was brought upon the plan at about the same date with Corby. An old barn, belonging to a cottager, was fitted up for preaching. The means were continued in this dilapidated building for near fourteen years. The present chapel was erected in 1832. It is a neat and convenient edifice, with a stable adjoining, for the accommodation of the preacher's horse. Subscriptions were raised in most parts of the circuit towards the expenses of erection, which, together with the collections at the opening, amounted to a sum that has left but a small debt to be liquidated. The security held by the Wesleyans for the continuance of the chapel, is the trust which they repose in the honorable proprietor, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, bart., and the payment of an annual land rent of ten shillings. The chief contriver of this chapel was Mr. F. Walton, and to whose persevering exertions, the comparatively easy circumstances in which it stands, are to be attributed. The congregation is respect-

able, but the society is only small; and probably its progressive increase will be by the way of the least to the greatest, rather than vice versa. A desire, therefore, to profit the rich, or such persons as are considered the most respectable of the community in the town, should not be indulged to an extent that would disparage, in the estimation of those whose duty it is to watch for souls, the conversion of the poor. Of him who spake as man did never speak, it is recorded, that "the common people heard him gladly." Mark xii. 37. Matthew xi. 5. James i. 9, 10.—ii. 5—9. A sabbath school, containing upwards of eighty children, is taught in this chapel. The formation of the school was effected by Mr. and Mrs. Walton, and to whose assiduity the management of its affairs is chiefly confided. The culture of this juvenile soil, if piously attended to, will yield, it is prayerfully anticipated, a more abundant harvest, to the praise of God's grace, than has hitherto been realised from the adult portion of the congregation.

The villages of Marston and Foston were attempted by out-door preaching, in the year 1818; and not without success. At Gelston a small society existed for a few years, about this time. But from calvinistic sentiments finding ingress, like the vessel upon the potter's wheel, it was marred, and the place was given up. It is reported that regular preaching and a society existed at Marston many years ago, and which would be nearly commensurate with the society at Great Gonerby. But of which no exact particulars can be gathered. In the summer of 1812, Mr. Pattisson preached in the street from a waggon. No farther exertions after

this were used to obtain a hold upon the village, until in the spring of 1818, when having been visited with a few sermons, which were delivered out of doors, by two or three of the local preachers, a door was opened in a small cottage house, into which the institutions of methodism were brought. The society and congregation continuing to increase, a strenuous effort was made in the year 1829 to raise a more commodious place for such persons as manifested a growing disposition to hear the word, when the erection of the present chapel was accomplished. The society is comprised of a goodly number of members; most of whom are indebted to methodistical labour for the attainment of gospel liberty, in the salvation of their souls; and to the possession of which their conduct affords unequivocal proof. The late clergyman of the parish is justly respected for his amiable manners, and the tolerance of spirit which characterises his proceedings amongst his parishioners. His ministry is evangelical and edifying, and to which the Methodists in general resort. John Haughton and Robert Brown are the class-leaders. Their regard for discipline, attachment to the economy of methodism, and general kindness, secure them the esteem of their brethren.

Preaching became established, and a small society formed, at Foston, in the year 1819. The chapel, which is ten yards by seven, was built in 1828. Mrs. Elizabeth Winter was the first to patronise the Methodists in the village. Her maiden name was Weightman. She was a native of Oxen, in the Mansfield circuit; and where she received her first religious impressions, when a girl, under Mrs. Taft, which led her to embrace the Saviour, and from the

love of whom she never afterwards either wickedly or carelessly departed. On being brought to a knowledge of the truth, she united with the society; and in all her changing residences in after life, she was a constant attendant on the Methodist ministry, and regularly met in class, if the means were within her reach. She was married to Mr. Daniel Winter, then residing at Foston, in the year 1794. He was a religious man. But shortly after their union, he unhappily drank into the spirit of the world; and from associating with persons of a sceptical character, he became tainted with the principles of infidelity. He read Paine's "Age of Reason," and other works of a similar cast, with which his new companions furnished him, which, together with their arguments, confirmed him in the reasonings of a Freethinker. After a lapse of some years he mercifully escaped these destructive errors, and savingly embraced the faith of Christ. It was by the instrumentality of the pious conversation of the late Mrs. Smith, of Balderton, and the persevering prayers of his wife, that his conversion from sin and scepticism, to truth and holiness, may be principally attributed. Previously to Mr. and Mrs. Winter's final abode at Foston, in 1819, they had removed their residence, once to Manchester, twice to Newark, once to Balderton, and thrice to Foston. Business might partly originate these changes; but to the unsettled and perturbed state of Mr. W's mind, they were to be attributed, more than to any plausible reason. Neither the world, nor the principles he had imbibed, could afford him any rest or quietude; nor were they likely: neither was the tranquility he sought, to be attained in the quest of any other object but a return to the Shepherd and

Bishop of souls, from whom he had revolted,—like unto Noah's dove (an emblem of his condition) which "found no rest for the sole of her foot," until she returned into the ark whence she had departed. Mr. W. joined the society on his admission of the gospel into his dwelling-house, in 1819. He died in peace, aged fifty-nine, in the year 1828. Mrs. Winter was called to exchange mortality for everlasting life and glory, on the 18th of January, 1833, in the fifty-sixth year of her age. Daniel Winter, their son, and Richard Willows, sustain the responsible office of class-leaders.

It is stated by some, who are now members of society, at Eaton, that they can recollect of preaching in the village, by the Methodists, as long as thirty years ago; and that the preachers used to take their stand, either in the street, or under a large elder tree which grew by the side of a garden wall, just by the west end of the church-yard. Mr. J. Harston, of Croxton, and Mr. Pearson, of Melton, were amongst others who came in this way to proclaim peace and salvation, in the name of Jesus, to the inhabitants of Eaton. But no persevering attempts to form a society and provide the village with regular preaching, appear to have been made until the year 1820. A person of the name of Davies, a local preacher, who was employed for some time in the works at Belvoir Castle, would frequently go over to Eaton on the Sabbath, and address the people, either in a house or out of doors. Mr. B. Wood, then stationed at Grantham, paid two or three visits to the place, previously to his leaving the circuit. During the following year, a society was formed by Mr. J. Roadhouse, when the village

was taken on the plan, and regularly visited by the preachers. Mr. Handley was appointed the first class-leader, commencing with twelve persons on trial. The meetings were held in the house of William Jesson. The present chapel was erected in 1823. The tenure is leasehold, for ninety-nine years, of Mr. John Rodgers, at the annual rent of two-and-sixpence. The society, at different periods, has met with considerable influx; and is distinguished for kindness, a regard to discipline, and christian liberality.

Miss Rebecca Bell, sister to Mrs. Bailey, died on the 29th of October, 1825. She had been a member of society a few years. Under a discourse of Mr. Porter, a local preacher in Derbyshire, which he delivered on an occasional visit to Eaton, she had her mind deeply impressed with a sense of sin and the need of salvation. It was sometime, however, before she was enabled to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God. When she obtained the blessing, she was on a visit at her uncle's, Mr. Roadhouse, then stationed at Peterborough. There was something rather singular in the way by which she was led to believe to the saving of her soul. For the sake of the monitory lesson it may afford some young females, more than for the singularity of the thing itself, it is here inserted. The circumstance may produce a smile from some; but the effect which was consequent upon it, was to Rebecca a cause of joyous exultation. As she was meditating one day on her want of confidence in the promises of pardon, which the gospel offers to the contrite sinner, she was led to inquire,

“What is it keeps me back,

From which I cannot part?

Which will not let the Saviour take  
Possession of my heart?  
Some cursed thing unknown  
Must surely lurk within;  
Some idol which I will not own,  
Some secret bosom-sin."

It struck her mind very forceably, that her earrings had been a hinderance to her; and that if she cast them off she should be enabled to obtain that for which she had so long and so earnestly sought,—"the pearl of great price,"—the imperishable jewel of salvation. She conferred not with flesh and blood, but immediately put away the dangling ornaments of a vain show, which appear to have had a secret influence on her heart; and there and then it was, whilst calling upon the name of the Lord, that she found it to be done unto her according to her faith. Peace and pardon were spoken to her troubled mind.

"The Spirit witnessed with the blood,  
And told her she was born of God."

"And ye shall seek me, and find me," saith the Lord, "when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Young persons religiously disposed, who possess a fondness for dress, may be inclined to dispute the advantage to Miss Bell from this scrupulosity in laying aside her ornaments. If inspiration had been silent on the subject, why then disputation might be agitated with a fairer show of reason; but since the scriptures have laid so plain an interdict upon jewels and conformity to the changing fashions of a vain and dissipated world, the followers of the Redeemer ought, without hesitation, on such a subject, to dispense with all con-

troversy. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves."\*

Miss Bell was eminently of a meek and quiet spirit. She strove in all things to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour; and was greatly beloved by her friends, and by such of her acquaintances as knew how to estimate her worth. Her race was short; but she finished her course with joy, being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light and glory, having washed her robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The following inscription is on her grave-stone, in Eaton church-yard. "Sacred to the memory of Rebecca Bell, daughter of George and Hannah Bell, who died October 29th, 1825, aged twenty-three years.

"Through long afflictions of severest kind,  
Her mind was patient, and her will resigned;  
In humble confidence on Christ relied,  
Beloved liv'd, and much lamented di'd."

Several persons, who were members of society, going to reside at Stathern, the means of grace were resumed in the village, by prayer meetings and oc-

\* See an article, entitled "Old Methodism," in the Methodist Magazine, 1836, page 272.



casional preaching in private houses. On two or three occasions, discharges were given to the occupiers of the houses in which the meetings were held, by the petty proprietors, because of their dislike either to methodism or religion. Repetitions, therefore, of this kind, with a desire peaceably and in all good conscience to worship God after their own manner, led the society to look out for a place of greater security against expulsion. Mr. Guy, of Plungar, having property in the village, cheerfully gave them a piece of land, with an old dovecote, of massy structure, which stood thereupon. This building was converted into a chapel, in the year 1826. As the congregation continued to increase, it was found necessary, in a few years, to make an enlargement of the chapel; which was effected in 1832. The recess, for the accommodation of the children, was added in the summer of 1834. The dimensions of the chapel, are thirty-six feet by eighteen, within. The recess, twenty-two feet by nine, additional, on the right-hand of the pulpit. It is a neat, lofty, and substantial building, and does much credit to several of the society in the town, for the zeal and liberality which they displayed in the different improvements it has undergone. The several expenses which have been had upon the chapel, amount to £225. The debt remaining £80. The Sunday School was commenced in 1833, in which there are eighty children under religious instruction. Stathern is two miles from Eaton, and about four miles south-west of Belvoir Castle.

A good and lively society exists at the pleasant and architecturally antique village of Harlaxton. The chapel which they occupy, was fitted up by

private subscription, and for which a heavy annual rentage is paid. But no society is more punctual in getting up its finances, nor cheerfully attends to the economy and discipline of methodism, than the society at Harlaxton.

From listening to out-door preaching at Ancaster, Mr. Ward, of Sudbrooke, was induced to open his door for the admission of the Methodist ministry, which was in 1821. Sudbrooke being a hamlet of Ancaster, and lying some distance from the parish church, the services of the Methodists have been an accommodation, and rendered useful to many in the village. It is a circumstance equally calculated to encourage as to be gratifying to Mr. Ward, that "the church which is in his house," bears the marks—and more particularly of late—of some which are named in primitive times, when the members thereof "had rest" from persecution, "and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Several young persons, and others farther advanced in life, have united to the society, and been brought to rejoice in the light of God's countenance. A chapel is much needed in the place; and the object before long, it is anticipated, will be realised.

Carlton was visited about the same time with Sudbrooke; when a society was formed and regular preaching established. The means of grace were continued in the house of John Craven for several years. This good man being the owner of a little freehold property, generously gave a piece of ground, adjoining his cottage house, on which to

erect a small chapel; and which was forthwith built, and opened early in the spring of 1833, by Mr. F. Eggleston, of Newark.

Thurlby, which lies two miles south of Bourn, is a large village, and which formerly belonged to the Stamford circuit, was ceded to Grantham in 1833. A commodious and substantially built chapel was erected in that year, by Mr. John Jackson, which was bought, and settled on trustees, in the manner of the Model Deed security, for the use of the Wesleyan Methodists. The congregation is large, and the society in a prosperous state. A Sunday School, comprising a considerable number of children, is taught in the chapel. The erection of a school room, by the side of the chapel, on a piece of ground which belongs to the trustees, is in contemplation.

The following Table presents the number of members at each place in the circuit, taken in the interval of 1794 and 1835, at about every fifth year; and which shows the progressive increase of the several societies, and the names of the villages which are attended by the Methodist Preachers.

	1794.	1798.	1804.	1809.	1814.	1818.	1820.	1825.	1830.	1835.
Grantham, ....	12	25	40	64	107	168	187	200	230	308
Great Gonerby, 24	24	35	27	26	23	41	41	25	37	
Muston, .....	10	18	30	25	17	16	14	19	19	33
Skillington, ....	16	36	43	40	43	27	28	23	21	62
Croxton, .....	6	7	12	18	37	33	32	48	49	70
*Plungar, ....	11	19	16	15	27	28	26	31	61	41
Aslackby, .....			20	27	18	20	17	15	12	12
Billingborough, .....			19	25	25	25	18	11	29	22
Bottesford, .....			14	10	10	6	6	Thurlby,	21	

1794. 1798. 1804. 1809. 1814. 1818. 1820. 1825. 1830. 1835.

Sproxtton, .....	13	25	16	16	19	18	16	14	
Saltby, .....	16	15	14	6	9			14	
Granby, .....	17	20	18	20	19	23	34	51	
*Colsterworth,.....	21	16	24	13	14	11	12	35	
Great Ponton,.....	9	32	13	12	15	14	20	18	
South Witham,.....	18	33	30	21	24	21	16	25	
Welby, .....	8	9	7	6	21	27	19	30	
Allington, .....	8					Braceby, 6	Toft, 7		
Wymondham,.....	8					Sapperton, 7	11		
Sewstern, .....	22	29	27	22	22	22	25	45	
Bourn,.....	8	65	48	41	71	79	73		
Barkston,.....			13	14	20	26	21	49	
Ropsley, .....			8			5		11	
Barrowby, .....			8			4		19	
Swinstead, .....				13	13	7		4	
Oazby or Thorpe .....				10	8	9	5	6	
Corby .....				11			7	15	
Gelston, .....				6	9	4			
Rippingale, .....					13	9	14	6	
Marston, .....					16	15	32	33	
Foston, .....					5	17	21	37	
Bitchfield, .....					6	3	3	4	
Pointon, .....					9	19	11	16	
Rippingale, .....					13	9	14	6	
Denton, .....						20	25	28	
Sudbrooke, .....						8	8	18	
Carlton, .....						16	16	14	
Londonthorpe .....						3		8	
Eaton, .....						27	34	34	
Stathern, .....						8	23	21	
Baston,.....							12	10	
Harlaxton 22, Woolsthorpe 17, .....								39	
Westborough 5, Somerby 4, Whyville 4,.....								13	
Swayfield 5, Hanthorpe 8, Market Deeping 6,.....								19	
Total....	79	129	339	439	555	569	665	817	1004 1328

\* The society at Plungar existed at Barkstone previously to 1796; and the Colsterworth society at Woolsthorpe until the year 1816. At several of the places the societies were formed at an earlier date than when they first appear in this table.

The Preachers who have travelled at Grantham, since the formation of the circuit, were stationed in the order as follows:—

- 1803. John King, Isaac Lilley
- 1804. William Palmer, Isaac Lilley
- 1805. John Barrit, John Lee
- 1806. John Barrit, William Salt
- 1807. Simon Day, Thomas Slinger
- 1808. Simon Day, Thomas Pollard
- 1809. William Moulton, Thomas Pollard
- 1810. William Moulton, John Cullen
- 1811. William Moulton, George Bellamy
- 1812. Richard Pattisson, George Wilson
- 1813. Richard Pattisson, Jarvis Shaw
- 1814. Thomas Tattershall, Thomas Edman
- 1815. Thomas Tattershall, John Ingham
- 1816. Lawrence Kershaw, Francis Burgess
- 1817. Lawrence Kershaw, Joseph Armstrong
- 1818. Benjamin Wood, Thomas Key
- 1819. Benjamin Wood, Henry Tuck
- 1820. Benjamin Wood, W. Howarth, H. Tuck, supernumerary
- 1821. William Harrison, sen., John Roadhouse
- 1822. William Harrison, sen., Robert Morton
- 1823. Thomas Fletcher, Robert Morton, Daniel S. Tatham
- 1824. Thomas Fletcher, J. W. Barret, W. B. Stephenson
- 1825. Thomas Simmonite, Joseph Lewis, W. B. Stephenson
- 1826. Cuthbert Whiteside, Joseph Lewis, William Allen
- 1827. Cuthbert Whiteside, Joseph Lewis, William W. Stamp
- 1828. John Simpson, sen., Thomas Newton
- 1829. John Simpson, sen., Thomas Newton
- 1830. William Sleigh, John Armitage; J. Simpson, sup.
- 1831. William Sleigh, Archibald M'Laughlin; J. Simpson, sup.
- 1832. Thomas Cocking, William Blundell; J. Simpson, T. Simmonite, sups.
- 1833. Thomas Cocking, William Blundell; J. Simpson, T. Simmonite, sups.
- 1834. Thomas Cocking, William D. Goy, Battinson Kay; J. Simpson, sup.
- 1835. William D. Goy, James Cheeswright, John Heap; J. Simpson, sup.

The following are the Local Preachers, whose names appear upon the Plan ending October 23rd, 1836.

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. T. Handley, Croxton        | 26. Joseph Robson, Grantham    |
| 2. W. Harris, Ponton          | 27. James Coultas, Ditto       |
| 3. R. Ward, Sproxton          | 28. Alfred Mousir, Ditto       |
| 4. S. Veasey, Sewstern        | 29. Samuel Hebb, Plungar       |
| 5. T. Christian, Skillington  | 30. J. Silverwood, Skillington |
| 6. T. Dixon, Grantham         | 31. John Derry, Grantham       |
| 7. T. Butters, Pointon        | 32. John Adcock, Witham        |
| 8. F. Welborn, Plungar        | 33. Henry Bryan, Thurlby       |
| 9. J. Morley, Skillington     | 34. J. Porter, Swinstead       |
| 10. T. Redshaw, Bourn         | ON PROBATION.                  |
| 11. V. Case, Colsterworth     | 35. Robert Christian, Witham   |
| 12. F. Walton, Rippingale     | 36. W. Fitchett, Grantham      |
| 13. T. Modd, Ropsley          | 37. J. Burbank, Witham         |
| 14. T. Kirke, Barrowby        | 38. Thomas Tuck, Grantham      |
| 15. T. Cant, Pickworth        | 39. John Gilbert, Bourn        |
| 16. R. Brown, Marston         | EXHORTERS.                     |
| 17. D. Dixon, Grantham        | 40. John Mousir, Grantham      |
| 18. W. Bakes, Ditto           | 41. F. Jackson, Ditto          |
| 19. J. Wardley, Bourn         | 42. Henry Atkin, Ditto         |
| 20. W. Sharp, Ditto           | 43. William Mason, Ditto       |
| 21. J. A. Matthews, Swayfield | 44. W. C. Williamson, Ditto    |
| 22. R. Willows, Foston        | 45. W. Shircliffe, Barkston    |
| 23. John Beck, Carlton        | 46. J. Smith, Ditto            |
| 24. Robert Marriott, Granby   | 47. J. Kirk, Grantham          |
| 25. W. Jackson, Thurlby       |                                |

## CHAPTER XII.

### REMINISCENCES,—PREACHERS' HOUSES AND BURYING-GROUND,—CONCLUSION.

When a retrospect is taken of years gone by, the memory becomes quickened with the recollection of persons who were once dear to some, and of their piety and activity which had influence in the world and the church, before that which was mortal of their existence had fallen into the shades of an oblivion, "where all things are forgot." A number of names, of sacred memory, whose character was of this description, have already been introduced; and there are a few others, who, from the position in which they stood to methodism, previously to the relentless hand of death consigning them to the house appointed for all living, justly merit a place in this monumental record.

A meditation among the tombs in Granby churchyard, will lead to several inscriptions which point out the spot where lie deposited the mortal remains of individuals who were allied to the Methodist cause, in the day of their probation, from the spiritual profit which they derived from its ministry, and from principle or profession. In the south-west corner of that cemetery, a gravestone has inscribed upon it, "Robert Hopwell, who died April 6th, 1803, aged forty-one.

"Here lies an unprofitable servant."

This person was one of the first members at Granby; and was esteemed a good man. Upon an adjoining stone, there is written, "Elizabeth Hopwell, who died February 1st, 1823, aged eighty.

"How many pompous epitaphs are spread,  
To celebrate the praises of the dead.  
Vain waste of time! since all must know  
The judgment day will plainly shew."

It was at the house of this individual that the meetings were first held, and until the erection of the chapel. Robert was the nephew of Elizabeth Hopwell. Both of whom used to meet in class at Barks-ton, before the means were established at Granby.

On the south side of the church there are groups of family grave-stones. Of the Newbury family there are the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Newbury, and Mrs. Doubleday, their daughter; of whose demise mention has already been made. Mr. Richard Doubleday, who had long and faithfully served the cause of religion, in the society at Granby, exchanged the present world for that of glory, on the 21st of July, 1835. A short account of the death and character of this excellent man may be found in the Methodist Magazine for 1835, page 805.

"John Handbury, who died May 27th, 1815, aged sixty-seven." His widow is yet alive, in the eighty-sixth year of her age, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; and who, with her son and three daughters, have for many years been members of the society.

"Elizabeth, wife of William Levers, who died



May 8th, 1817, aged thirty-two." And "Lucy," second "wife of William Levers, who departed this life on the 18th of June, 1824, in the forty-ninth year of her age." These were two holy women, both of whom finished their earthly course in joyous triumph over the last enemy.

"John Goodacre, who died February 6th, 1824, aged forty-nine; and Frances, his wife, who died December 17th, 1823, aged forty-seven. Thus by a mysterious Providence in less than two months were eleven children bereaved of their parents.

" 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive.' *Jer. xlix. 11.*

" 'For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.' *Hosea xiv. 3.*"

Several of the children are members of christian society, and a gracious Providence has been strikingly vouchsafed to the family.

On a tomb-stone,—sacred to the memory of "Henry, son of Matthew and Sarah Hall," who died March 19th, 1829, aged eighteen,—are inscribed the following very descriptive lines:—

" 'To depart and be with Christ is far better.' *Phil. 1. 23.*

" Weep not, my father; weep not, mother dear;  
And you, my friends, restrain the falling tear:  
If death came early,—thanks to Him who gave  
His life, a ransom our lost souls to save,—  
Unterrified the summons I receiv'd,  
For my soul knew in whom it had believ'd.  
O! breathe not o'er my grave the unthankful sigh,  
But raise your notes of praise, and triumph high:  
Bless Him through whose free grace my sins forgiven,  
And all my stains wash'd out, I rest in heav'n.—  
Farewell! dear parents, and my friends farewell!  
I go with Christ in perfect bliss to dwell."

Henry was the eldest son of his parents, and was justly esteemed as a most amiable and pious youth. The above lines, which are considered very expressive of his religious state and the tender sympathy of his heart, were left behind him in a certain place where they were likely to be noticed by the family, and were referred to by himself as applicable to the gracious feelings of his own mind. In the same vault are deposited the remains of Sarah, his sister, who departed this life, October 22nd, 1824, aged eleven years. She was a lovely child in the affections of her parents; and yet more beloved of the Lord: for notwithstanding her tender age, she had attained that wisdom in the school of Christ, of which many who are advanced in life and possessed of much knowledge, are living in ignorance. To the religion of the heart, which sanctifies and prepares for heaven, she was no stranger, and she died in the triumph of faith. These interesting young persons, whose spirits have entered the "Eden of God," have left, in the militant state, brothers and sisters, all of whom are engaged in "the good fight of faith." May they endure to the end.

The first travelling preacher that terminated his ministerial labours with his life, at Grantham, was Mr. Archibald McLaughlin. He possessed considerable genius, was very affable in his manners, and deeply devoted to God. In his itinerant work he had to meet with many discouragements, which greatly depressed him. During his last affliction, which was not of long continuance, the God whom he had endeavoured, with all his ability, faithfully to serve, did not forsake him. When his sun of life was about to sink below its horizon, he had the

assurance that he should rise in the hemisphere of unclouded light and everlasting glory. "Write upon the wall," says he, a little before his departure, with an out-stretched arm, and pointing to the opposite side of the room,—“Write upon the wall, that Archibald M'Laughlin has gone to glory!” His death is recorded in the Minutes of Conference for 1832, as follows:—“His health was impaired when he entered on his last appointment, and in a few months he was constrained to discontinue his public labours. In the extremity of his sickness, the Gospel was an effectual solace to him; and in the concluding hours of his life, he expressed an earnest and well-grounded hope of a blessed immortality. He died May 12th, 1832, in the twenty-first year of his ministry, aged forty-six.”

Died at Grantham, January 11th, 1834, Mrs. Sarah Leak, in the fifty-fourth year of her age. About twenty-two years prior to her death, under a sermon delivered by Mr. John Draper, at Norman-ton, then in the Lincoln circuit, she was awakened to a deep and distressing conviction of sin. She obtained a clear sense of God's pardoning love to her soul, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ, on the same night in which she was made sensible of her state as a lost sinner; and her subsequent conduct and temper proved the reality of the change she experienced. The desire she had for the spiritual interests of her children, excited in her the most anxious solicitude; and her prayers and efforts were extensively realised. Nine of them, out of ten, together with her widowed husband, and six of their sons' wives, are members of the Methodist society. For upwards of twenty

years Mrs. Leak suffered great bodily affliction, which terminated only with her earthly existence : but which she was enabled to endure with much long-suffering, patience, and christian fortitude, as seeing Him that is invisible. Previously to the closing scene of mortality, her soul was remarkably tranquil and happy. With her expiring breath she ejaculated, "Praise God ! Praise God ! Glory ! Glory !" Her affliction was an asthma, brought on by sleeping in a damp bed, and which was so severe as seldom to allow her to lie down.

Mary Mabbot, the wife of Simeon, one of the younger sons of Mr. and Mrs. Leak, died in the triumph of faith, May 31st, 1834, aged twenty-two. She was a deeply pious young woman, and one who loved God with all her heart. It was her delight to be employed in doing good. As a Tract Distributor and Sunday-School Teacher, she was a pattern for constancy and fidelity. A short time before her last affliction, she was employed as a Missionary Collector ; and for which department of female labour in the great cause of the world's salvation, Mrs. Leak possessed those qualities which gave anticipation, had her life been spared, she would have become extensively successful. Before her marriage she had lived in an obscure part of the country ; and had it not been for her residence in Grantham, which brought her somewhat into notice in the society, her condition might have been such as to illustrate the beautiful comparison of the Poet,

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

But for a short time she lived usefully, died most happily, and the path she trod invites the feet of those who knew her, to walk therein.

Mr. W. Northedge one of the oldest class-leaders at Grantham, was called to his reward on the 16th of April, 1834, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. He was a native of Arthill, in Yorkshire; and was brought to God, when a young man, among the Methodists at Newark. For a succession of years he was esteemed a man of prayer and faith, and as being truly devoted to God, and eminently spiritually minded. He had to pass through a sea of trouble, but his hope centred in the loving-kindness of a covenant keeping God, and his confidence never seemed to fail him. The language of Job was adopted by him in his utmost extremity, "Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee." He enjoyed much intercourse with heaven. The Spirit of God dwelt richly in his heart, affording him a perpetual flow of divine consolation. The visitations of God to his soul were so powerful, that he frequently broke out in devout aspirations of praise in the night watches. To do good, and to communicate, he was always intent; and to help others in their temporal necessities he has occasionally been known to subject himself to privations. He was upright and well-meaning in all his transactions; although in the latter period of his life, Providence was not so auspicious towards him as previously it had been: and he knew what it was to have his faith put to the test as to the promise which declares, "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." He finished his course in peace, and in the maintenance of an unshaken confidence

in the blood of Christ, which in its application sanctifies and makes meet for heaven.—William, the eldest son of Mr. N. died a few months after his father, on the 20th of July, aged twenty-one, in a very happy and triumphant manner. It was not until his last affliction that he attained true religion. Then it was that he sought salvation in deep penitence and with all his heart. He did not seek in vain. The love of God was powerfully shed abroad in his heart. The few remaining days he lived, after this gracious change, he sung and prayed, and talked most delightfully to all who visited him of his enjoyments and prospects of heaven, purposing, if God spared his life, to be a true witness of his redeeming Lord. But he was taken from the evil to come, and has left his mother with three younger children to lament their loss.

Mr. W. Christian and Mrs. Berridge, of Skillington, were called, within three days of each other, to exchange the "earthly house of their tabernacle, for the building which they had of God, a house eternal in the heavens." They were the oldest members in the circuit at the time of their death, and had continued regularly in society, with all good report, for the space of more than fifty years. Mr. Christian had resided at Ruskington, with his youngest son, for about five years, when within a few months of his death he returned to Skillington. At which time he displayed the marks of age and feebleness, and his constitution began to break with rapidity; but in the progress of dissolution he reposed with humble confidence on the all-sufficiency of the atonement of Jesus Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace and in devout assurance of everlasting life.

Mrs. Berridge, from whose religious constancy the establishment of methodism in Skillington is to be chiefly attributed, was of a kind and generous disposition; and to do good she was assiduously intent, without ostentation. Her mind was capacious, and according to her opportunities was well cultivated. Her regard for the Holy Scriptures, as a rule of faith and practice, was remarkably conscientious; and whilst she steadily and firmly adhered to the essential principles and practices of christianity, she was always open to conviction, so that when she perceived she had entertained on any subject an erroneous *opinion*, or had pursued a *practice* which might not be strictly tenable, her tenacity to maintain the mere appearance of uniformity, was not such as to influence her determinately to hold the one or pursue the other. She yielded assent to the law of truth, and most readily received instruction from any who were capable of affording it, and especially from those to whose counsel in divine things she was wont to listen. This deference to the views of others, whose opportunities to acquire knowledge which relates to moral rectitude and christian discipline, she was aware were more favorable than her own, exemplified a sound judgment and an upright heart; and was the display of a temper of mind not always to be met with amongst persons of less influence and of shorter standing in religious society than Mrs. B.\*

\* As an example of what is here meant, the following may illustrate. The preachers on the circuit, at a certain time, had been denouncing the too prevalent practice of Sunday Baking, at public bake-houses, by the members of society, on the broad principle of the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath, and as being at variance with the decision of Conference, as expressed in its printed Minutes. Some were offended, and others disposed to

This frankness of disposition,—this trait of true humility,—spread a halo around her which rendered her character both amiable and attractive.

To affliction, both in her own person and the members of her family, this excellent woman was no stranger; but which was borne with exemplary patience and fortitude, as “seeing him who is invisible;” being firmly persuaded that the cup she was called to drink was prepared and mingled by the skill of her heavenly Physician. She therefore drank it cheerfully, and found it salutary to the health of her soul; whilst she rejoiced that her trials in this respect were but momentary and light, when viewed in contrast with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” which was consequent upon them. On the 27th of January, 1828, she was called to sustain the bereavement of her affectionate husband, Mr. T. Berridge, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. They had been united in marriage upwards of forty years; during which period they had lived together in perfect concord and harmony. He was a man of unobtrusive manners,

litigate and be contentious, whilst a few acknowledged the evil and abandoned the practice. Mrs. B. was among the conscientious few who yielded to the ministerial and pastoral persuasion of the preachers. On inquiry, in private, as to the general arguments against the custom, she said to one of the preachers, that she should be very sorry to persist in any thing which might grieve the Spirit of God and prove a snare to others, or which would tend in any measure to give countenance to the desecration of the Sabbath in any of its forms; and that she had, therefore, desisted from sending her Sunday dinner to the bake-house, which she must acknowledge she had formerly been in the habit of doing.—See Heb. xiii. 17. See also a pamphlet on “Sunday Baking,” and the violation of the Sabbath in general, by the author of this work.



and of a meek and quiet spirit. He had been brought to the knowledge of the truth previously to his marriage; and was one amongst the many of the first fruits of the Methodist ministry in the village and neighbourhood of Skillington. He died in peace, through faith in a crucified Saviour. The icy hand of death, antecedently to this, had siezed upon six of their children, and snatched them in succession from their embrace. They were all girls. Four of them died in infancy. The surviving two became the hope of their parents, and on whose continuance they looked with anticipations of pleasure. But how transitory are joys when made to depend on the insecurity of health or life. The truth of this, Mr. and Mrs. B. were soon brought practically to realize. One of the children being from home, a messenger was sent to inform the parents that their blooming girl was taken suddenly ill. The father immediately set off to visit her. On his return he brought intelligence to the mother that their Ellen was no more! An adequate conception of the shock produced, by this melancholy announcement, upon the feelings of the mother, can only be formed by such as have experienced a similar trial. The only surviving child, Ann, became the subject of protracted affliction, which terminated her earthly career, May 30th, 1821. It is related of this young person, who had from her childhood walked in the fear of God, that towards the closing scene of life, when seated one day in her chair, she suddenly fell down upon her knees, exclaiming, "I must go, for my Lord will have me come!" The impression upon her mind was but too painfully certain to her affectionate parents, for after contending a short period with the power of

disease upon her, she gave satisfactory evidence of her prospects of heaven, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus; whilst her bereaved mother, turning from the bed on which was laid her last offspring in lifeless prostration, exclaimed, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in: and the saints of the Most High shall be kings and priests unto God and the Lamb, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

At the death of her husband, Mrs. B. retired from the business of a large farm, which they had previously occupied for many years, to a smaller house in the village, where she resided in comparative seclusion from the cares of active life. But in which seclusion her piety was not of that kind as to degenerate into sloth and inactivity; for as she had before been distinguished, when her household was extensive, for great order and decorum in all her domestic arrangements, and for attention to the temporal comfort of all around her, she continued, when less propelled by circumstances, to evince a strict regard for the apostolic rule, "Not slothful in business;" and more especially she was careful to be "fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." "To hospitality" she was invariably "given."

The repeated inroads which were made upon her family by the visitation of death,—and whilst to this award of heaven she bowed with submission,—from the susceptibility of her mind and the tenderness of her heart, it was scarcely possible that the trial should not make impression on her physical strength, and of which her declining health gave striking indications. She became the subject of much nervous debility, which was attended with considerable watchfulness and mental depression. The enemy

of souls likewise took occasion of her infirmity, and was permitted at times to sorely harass and perplex her. But though cast down by this combination of exercises, she was not utterly forsaken. Her distress was mitigated by the consolations of the gospel. In the deepest anguish of her mind, she would breathe her wishes to the skies, and was importunate with God to sustain her fainting spirits and to give her the victory. The language of her heart, in her utmost extremity, was, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Her faith evidently gathered strength in the midst of her conflicts, "and was heard in that she feared," whilst she "learned obedience by the things which she suffered." As a good soldier, she endured hardness; her determination being fixed to conquer, though earth and hell were combined to obstruct her entrance into heaven. She was always enabled to maintain her shield, and to keep her face directed towards Zion: which may be attributed to her diligent attendance on the means of grace; for thither she perseveringly resorted even to the last. The temptations by which her mind was assailed, and the languor and debility which she suffered, were never yielded to as a pretext to keep her from the house of God. Neither was she a stranger to closet retirement. In waiting upon God her spiritual strength was renewed. The anguish of mind she occasionally suffered, and the mode she adopted for support and deliverance, are epitomised in the soliloquy of David to his soul; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

In the year 1826, she was appointed to the charge

of the female class, which had been deprived of its leader in the death of Mrs. Rt. Christian. To the discharge of the duties of this important office, Mrs. B. proceeded with fear and trembling. Nothing but a conviction of its being her duty could have induced her to engage in the task. Not that she was favored with any superabounding evidence from God that it was his will she should enter upon the work. But in all her exercises of mind on the subject, she could come to no satisfactory conclusion that it was *not* his will. And having been selected as a proper person for the office, by those whose business it was to direct the affairs of the church, she received their appointment as the voice of God; and conscientiously following this conviction, the test of experience fully satisfied her that she had the approbation of the divine Spirit in the employment. In watering others, her own soul was watered: whilst her "labour of love," in respect to this work, was both acceptable and profitable to the members of her class, which encouraged her to go forward. In the year 1832, a very blessed revival of the work of God broke out in the village. The old members were quickened, and many were added to their number. On account of this increase it was judged advisable to divide the female class, and appoint a new leader to the other part. But none were found willing to share with the aged leader in her sacred toil; she was therefore constrained to prosecute the increased labour, although with less ability to perform it, as was evident from her lengthened years and growing infirmities. But she was constant at her post of duty; and never allowed any obstacle, which could possibly be surmounted, to prevent her attending on her class.

In the spring of 1833, a fall she met with in her own house, occasioned a contusion or dislocation of the hip; by which calamity she became completely disabled. For more than eight months she was not capable of pressing the foot with any weight upon the ground. Afterwards, by degrees, she was enabled to walk a little with crutches. This affliction, from her years and general activity, was attended with no ordinary degree of pain, both as to bodily suffering and the exercise of her mind. But patience had its perfect work. She saw the hand that used the rod, and submissively bowed to the chastisement. That which she most lamented, was the being detained for so long a time from the house of God. Her thirst for the word of life was so ardent, that she resolved upon venturing thither in this state of crippleness, by the tedious process of walking with her crutches, which she accomplished for a few times. But finding this mode of travelling both dangerous and over fatiguing, and having but little hope of restoration, she procured a hand-carriage, in which, for a little while, she was drawn to and from the chapel. She had not, however, enjoyed this advantage many times before the Lord saw fit to remove his servant hence, to join the hosts above, who day and night, without either weariness or pain, worship God in the heavenly temple. It was not anticipated by those about her, even on the day she died, that her end was so near. She had paid several visits to her dying brother, whose house was just by, and on which occasions she would spend some time with him in conversation and prayer. On retiring from these visits, where she had beheld the emaciated frame of her dear relative, and the strong pains which were upon

him, she became very sensibly affected, until she found it impossible to repeat her calls. She began to droop and languish, and expressed a presentiment that she should not long survive her brother, and that they should soon meet where death is unknown and parting is no more. She took to her bed for a few days. The state of her mind at this time was tranquil, and her confidence in God her Saviour more than usually strong. The fear of death was removed, and her soul appeared occasionally to exult in the prospect of being speedily called to pass from the militant to the triumphant state. To her nephew, Mr. John Christian, who was leaving the house for a short time on business, early in the morning, she said, in reply to some remarks he had made, "I will trust, and not be afraid." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." And then, with peculiar emphasis, she exclaimed, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." On Mr. C's return from the fields before noon, he was surprised to learn that the spirit had quitted the clay tenement, and was fled to the Eden of God. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." In Mrs. Berridge the poor have lost a kind benefactress, and the cause of God one of its liberal supporters. She departed this life, Saturday, August 2nd, 1834, aged seventy-six, the day on which the remains of her brother were carried to the house appointed for all living. They "were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

In July, 1834, at the age of seventy-three, Mr. James Easton finished his earthly pilgrimage, and entered upon the Canaan of everlasting rest. He came to reside at Grantham, as a schoolmaster, from Horncastle, in the year 1816. He had been in society for near fifty years, and had sustained, during the greater part of that period, the office of a local preacher. His habits and appearance were antique; and his manners somewhat eccentric. He was a bachelor. In the instruction of the children committed to his care, he was very assiduous; whilst he was a master of the old school. As a grammarian and arithmetician he was considered to excel. In theology his judgment was sound, and his statements clear; and whilst in his religious principles he was uncompromising, his moral conduct was invariably distinguished by the strictest rectitude. In his class, and at the lovefeasts which he attended, he uniformly bore testimony to his personal experience of entire sanctification. To preach the gospel was his delight; and his appointments in the circuit, whether near or at a distance, were always attended by him with punctuality and cheerfulness. The last year of his life was one of painful affliction. He was visited with repeated attacks of paralysis, which reduced him to a state of complete imbecility, both in mind and body. But in which condition,—happy for him,—he had not his religion to seek.

The death of Mr. Guy, of Plungar, took place rather suddenly, on the 18th of November, 1834, when in the seventy-third year of his age. At midnight he was summoned to go forth to meet the heavenly Bridegroom; but his lamp was trimmed, and his light burning. Some particulars of his

death and character may be found in the Methodist Magazine, 1835, page 156.—On the 24th of January following, George Braithwaite, of Plungar, was called to his reward, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. He derived his first religious impressions when a youth, from the ministry of a pious curate of Whymswould, of the name of Whiteman. On coming to reside at Plungar, in the twentieth year of his age, he began to meet in class at Barkstone, and was among the first members of the Methodist society in that village. He was soundly converted to God; and from the commencement of his religious profession, to the period of his death, his character for pious demeanour and uprightness of conduct, was truly exemplary. He was a poor man, and had brought up a large family. When his children were all young, and entirely dependent on him for support, he used to work hard, as an agricultural labourer, both early and late, that he “might provide things honest in the sight of all men” for his household. This he was enabled to do without the aid of charity or parish allowance; and at a time when corn was at the highest price, and the difficulties of a labouring man, with a dependent family, were never more extreme. It has been remarked by some, whose years and residence in the parish were coeval with those of this good man, that whatever reflections might be cast upon others for want of integrity, or consistency in religious profession, no charge of this kind was ever heard to be preferred against George Braithwaite. He had his children in subjection, whilst he trained them up in the way that they should go. Five of them, four sons and a daughter, are now married and settled in life; all of whom, with the husband



of the daughter, and the wives of the sons, are consistent and much-respected members of the Methodist society. He died of a decline. His constitution had been much weakened by excessive labour and hard fare during former years; but God was with him when his heart and flesh failed. He was an humble and devout christian, and his confidence in the atonement of his Redeemer was strong and undeviating. The closing scene of life was not only calm and peaceful, but joyful and triumphant; and when he could no longer articulate his hopes and prospects of a better world, he lifted up his arm, and waved his hand, in token of victory over the last enemy. "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth."—Several members of the society at Plungar, were called from the sufferings of this life to the joys of heaven, betwixt the Conferences of 1834 and 1835. Among whom might be named, Thomas Welbourne. He was a veteran; having lived to see fourscore years, forty of which he had been in society; and has left a progeny of children and grandchildren, many of whom are imitating their pious ancestor in striving to find their way to heaven.—Ann Flint and Ann Watchorn were of the number of those, who at that period, entered into rest. The former died of pulmonary consumption, at the age of forty-three. She bore her affliction with entire submission to the Divine will, and gave evident tokens that she possessed the grace of God in truth. The latter was called away at the age of forty-one, whilst surrounded with a number of young children; who, with their father, are left to mourn their loss. She died of an obstinate attack of jaundice. For several years she had lived in the family of Mr. Guy, whence she was married. She

was a good woman, and exercised strong faith in the blessed promises of the gospel, and died in the full assurance of going to glory. The love of Christ in her heart, for some time previously to her dissolution being anticipated, was sweeter to her than life, and stronger than the fear of death.

To a preacher, a comfortable and healthy residence for his family, is a consideration; and next to the prosperity of the cause of God, an attention to this is consistent with his duty. When the finances of circuits will allow of such provision, the obligation of the societies to their ministers and families requires them to readily and cheerfully make it. The Grantham circuit had it in contemplation several years, to procure dwelling houses for the preachers, which should be private and healthy, and in other respects suitable and convenient; but from various causes, the good wishes of the friends were not realised to the extent which they proposed, until the year 1835. Some building ground being offered for sale, in December, 1834, on the south side of the town, a piece was bought, containing, by admeasurement, ninety feet by one hundred and thirty; the vendor giving five feet frontage for a causeway. The land thus purchased is completely walled in, and a considerable portion of which is reserved as a Burying-ground. The two Preachers' Houses and a small Chapel occupy the whole space in front, and which present an air of neatness. The size of the chapel is twenty-one feet by thirty-seven. There are eight good rooms in each of the houses, and which are all of nearly equal size, fourteen feet by thirteen; three rooms below stairs, a parlour, house, and cellar kitchen,

and five chambers. The front passage is six feet wide, with staircase commencing fourteen feet from the front door; by the side of which, the passage extends to the back door, three feet wide. Both houses are perfectly uniform. The situation is dry and airy. A well of spring water, and pump, in the yard, with a soft-water cistern to each house, and tap in the kitchen. The buildings are brick and slated. The whole cost about £1300. The subscriptions towards which amounted to £1000, including sums of £500. on life annuity. The property is vested in trustees, for the use of the Wesleyan Methodists, on the plan of the Model Deed.

During the latter part of the preceding year, and the commencement of 1835, a gracious revival of the work of God was experienced at Grantham, and in some of the country parts of the circuit, when not less than two hundred and fifty notes were given at the March visitation of the classes. Most of these were savingly converted to God, and bade fare to become successful candidates for the crown of life. For more than twelve months they have continued to maintain their integrity, and to witness a good confession. May they be found faithful unto death. It would have been too much, however, to have entertained sanguine expectations that every blossom would have been fully set, and that fruit in each would have been perfected. A few of the blossoms were blighted; but comparatively few, to the predictions of some, who resolved the revival into mere animal excitement, or as produced by any thing but the Spirit of God. But the number who stand, demonstrate, by their subsequent conduct, that the testimony which they bore to their experience at the time, was correct, and

that the power of God was mightily in operation to produce such a change. Farther observations, however, on the subject of this revival, are unnecessary, as particulars connected with it were drawn up, at the time, by Mr. Goy, and which appear in the Methodist Magazine for 1835, at page 376 ; and to which revival also, allusion has been made whilst detailing the state of some of the country societies in the course of this work.

The Almighty has evidently conferred great honour upon the Methodists;—if it is an honour to be owned of him, in an instrumental manner, in “turning sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;”—and in this honour great responsibility devolves upon them, both in their individual and connexional capacity. That they may have the blessing of God to abide upon their tabernacle,—that they may be saved themselves and be the means of saving their fellow-men,—is an object more than any other to be desired. The security of this materially depends upon fidelity and union in a society, in a circuit, and in the Connexion at large. *Fidelity* is necessary to the inviolate maintenance of the Methodist doctrines, experience, and discipline. And *union*, whereby the members of a christian community “kindly think and speak the same.” “Behold,” says the psalmist, “how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

“*Union*,” says Dr. A. Clarke, “among the followers of Christ is strongly recommended. How can

spiritual brethren fall out by the way? Have they not all one Father, all one Head? Do they not form one body, and are they not all members of each other? Would it not be monstrous to see the nails pulling out the eyes, the hands tearing off the flesh from the body, the teeth biting out the tongue, &c. &c.? And is it less so to see the members of a christian society bite and devour each other, till they are consumed one of another? Every member of the mystical body of Christ should labour for the comfort and edification of the whole, and the honour of the Head. He that would live a quiet life, and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, must be as backward to *take* offence as to *give* it. Would all act on this plan (and surely it is as rational as it is christian) we should soon have glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will among men."

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